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APR 17

EDITORIAL

NO, BUT I CAN FAKE IT

Scandals involving falsified laboratory data are a spreading stain on the scientific community. The latest case of fabricated research implicated a Nobel laureate, now president of Rockefeller University, David Baltimore, and the laboratory chief at lofty M.I.T., Theresza Imanishi-Kari. A paper they co-published, which touted a major discovery in immunology, was exposed as fraudulent by a lab assistant named Margot O'Toole, who spent years in Coventry before her charges were upheld by a National Institutes of Health panel.

The image of the scientist as a noble, altruistic truth-seeker went out with Sinclair Lewis's Martin Arrowsmith. Science, like poetry, can be a mug's game. Some of those aseptic researchers in white coats would kill for a Nobel-class discovery like "cold fusion" and carve up some backs to snag a government grant. And such is the clubby nature of the scientific establishment that big names in the field will close ranks to defend one of their own, as Baltimore's colleagues did when he was attacked. Poor Margot O'Toole found herself with a job answering phones after she dared to challenge the eminent Dr. Baltimore.

But there's another sinister intruder into the supposedly cloistered labs of academe that is menacing open, objective scientific inquiry. As Leonard Minsky and David Noble wrote in these pages ("Corporate Takeover on Campus," October 30, 1989), commercial considerations and corporate ethos dominate the large research universities, driving their labs to work in secrecy in a race to patent potentially lucrative discoveries and pressuring researchers to hype their data.

Well, hey—this is a country where C.I.A. disinformation is published in reputable newspapers, where Pentagon cooks ladle out processed war news. Why should science be different?

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LETTER FROM EUROPE

THE TREASON OF THE NEW INTELLECTUALS

DANIEL SINGER

Paris

The jingoist euphoria that followed a successful one-sided war may not last as long as the Republicans now assume. John Major, for example, having bowed to the need to dismantle Maggie Thatcher's poll tax, is painfully discovering that the British people cannot be blinded forever by sand from the desert.

And yet the political landscape does look different after the storm. To be more accurate, some of the changes are indeed new, while others have merely been brought more sharply into focus. Observing the conflict from Paris, its most striking—and most shocking—feature was the sordid silence of the intellectuals about the crimes committed in our name. The treason of the French clerics reached such unprecedented proportions that it raises the issue of whether, in the tenth year of his reign, François Mitterrand may not be in the process of completing his unexpected task, as a nominal socialist, of "normalizing" France by bringing it fully into the U.S. orbit. It raises a broader question, too: whether the inevitable and necessary collapse of the post-Stalinist system must now be followed—and for how long?—by the domination of the American ideology. These are some of the issues that I will touch upon in the notes that follow.

The Time of the Murderers

"Voici le temps des Assassins." Thus Arthur Rimbaud, who broke his pen at the age of 20, having revolu-

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LETTERS.

MALICIOUS?

Washington

Stephen Shalom's review of my book *Saddam Hussein and the Crisis in the Gulf* inaccurately and somewhat maliciously portrayed my publishing record ["Saddam Who?" Feb. 25]. I certainly erred in my judgment about Iraq and long ago publicly acknowledged that. But if Shalom really believes, as he wrote, that to fail in one's predictions is no sin, then his attack was unwarranted, particularly as I changed my position before August 2.

Shalom initially blurs the question of coauthorship. Although it was not impossible that there was some degree of disagreement between the authors—the acknowledgments indicate which of us had primary responsibility for each chapter—my publishing record is weighed against language I did not write. More important, Shalom missed some relevant articles I wrote in the spring of 1990, before Iraq invaded Kuwait. They include a highly favorable review of Samir al-Khalil's *Republic of Fear* in the Spring 1990 *Political Science Quarterly*; an article in a local paper, the May 3 *Boston Jewish Times*, "Tough Words Mean Tough Times in Baghdad"; and an article in the July 12 *Jerusalem Post*, "Saddam Hussein's New Line," written before Iraq began publicly to threaten Kuwait. Those articles argue that since February 1990 Saddam had deliberately sought to raise tensions with the United States and Israel, but not for the reasons usually cited—his Arab ambitions, fear of Israel, etc. Rather, he sought to contain internal dissatisfaction and extort money from the gulf Arabs. My book includes an expanded version of that argument.

For those reasons, I advocated a tougher posture toward Iraq at a late July meeting of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy's Strategic Study Group, held as Iraqi troops stood poised on Kuwait's border. Shalom's charge that my view "precisely parallels" that of official Washington is not precisely accurate. *Laurie Mylroie*

SHALOM REPLIES

Wayne, N.J.

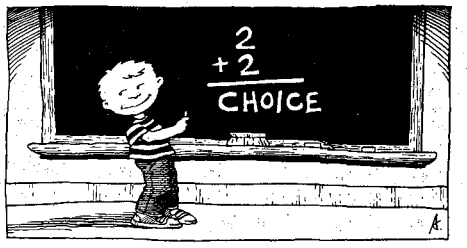
I did mean what I wrote: Failing in one's predictions is no sin. But Laurie Mylroie did not simply fail in her predictions. Before her recent conversion, she sought to justify the unjustifiable, encouraging us to overlook the evils of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship, his aggression against Iran, his use of chemical weapons, and so on.

The argument of Mylroie's *Boston Jewish Times* and *Jerusalem Post* pieces was that Saddam's "line" changed, that in February 1990 he became a danger to U.S. and, as the articles emphasize, Israeli interests, necessitating new policies toward him. But earlier, when Mylroie thought that despite Saddam's atrocities he was no danger to those interests, she urged Washington to "back Iraq." There was no acknowledgment here that it was wrong (immoral, not just ill advised) to have supported Iraq when it invaded Iran "launching the bloodiest war in the history of the modern Middle East," as Miller and Mylroie put it; no acknowledgment that it was immoral to provide Iraq with dual-use equipment, credits, loans, intelligence information and military advice, or to recommend, as Mylroie did, that Iraq be supplied with the most advanced military technology. That Mylroie told a pre-August 2 private meeting of the pro-Israel Washington Institute for Near East Policy (where she now works) that the United States ought to follow a tougher policy vis-à-vis Baghdad shows that she was more perceptive than I gave her credit for in recognizing U.S. and Israeli interests. But I don't believe I was incorrect in characterizing her level of moral discernment. *Stephen R. Shalom*

2+2=UN 4 TUNATE

College Park, Md.

I appreciate Deborah Meier's well-written and persuasive article, which showed educational choice working in East Harlem's District 4 ["Choice Can *Save* Public Education," March 4]. But because it concerned District 4—home to 15,000 mostly poor Latino and African-American students—I was shocked to find it illustrated with a drawing of a white boy. I expect to find females and people of color underrepresented in textbooks, *The Washington Post* and on TV, but in an innovative article like Meier's? I expect more from *The Nation*. *Becky Gaylord*



THEREFORE CHOOSE WALDORF

Bellingham, Wash.

As a former public school teacher and a parent of four children who attend private grade school, a Waldorf school, I find no comfort in Deborah Meier's description of the perfect scenario for educational reform. To be comfortable with it, I would have to believe that the goal of education is to inject information into children's heads in ever more efficient and clever ways. Then I could happily shop among a variety of public schools and find one that provided the best for my children. Why should my choice be constrained by the limits of Meier's or anyone's imagination? Waldorf schools uniquely provide what I want for my children—an education of "head, heart and hands," of living knowledge rather than dead information. However, it is available to me only at great financial sacrifice while my tax dollars support the public schools. Meier's generalized statements about private schools—that their quality is determined by the students, that they are not innovative, are "convention-bound" and discriminate in enrollment—certainly do not apply to Waldorf schools, the fastest-growing private educational movement in the United States. I can only conclude that the real threat posed by the movement for *true* choice in education is to the considerable political and economic power the public school system wields. The sooner we pull the rug out from under this monopoly, the better—for our children and for our country. *Lorraine Jarvi*

MEIER REPLIES

New York City

Lorraine Jarvi's remarks are an illustration of exactly the point I was making. My target audience was people like myself who have long held out for public education and intend to keep doing so. I hoped to open their minds to the possibility that choice could be an important tool in our work. However, Jarvi comes from the opposite corner. She is an all-out—and proud—enemy of public education. Although Americans who attend private schools are few in number, they sap needed energy, and they influence many of those who are most articulate and powerful. While only 3 percent of New York City students actually attend nonreligious private schools (another 17 percent attend religious schools), it's fashionable to say, "No one sends their children to public schools anymore." It's that vast majority of "no ones" that American policy must address.

Jarvi exemplifies the mindset we need to address: the view that public equals factory-style—"injecting information into children's heads." As I noted in telling the story of District 4, that is just what its superintendent set out to disprove. Public education need not be factory-style at all, even in our inner cities. The Central Park East schools in District 4, for example, are far closer to the Waldorf "head, heart and hands" spirit than to any "transmission belt" idea of schooling.

We've had many small and innovative private school movements over the past hundred years. That their pioneering spirit and democratic impulses never influenced the way most of our children were educated, least of all those most in need, is tragic. A system of public school choice offers a way to challenge the status quo. In such a system, the Waldorf movement's ideas, along with many other "imaginable" ideas, might be heard in the mainstream and influence how Americans educate *all* their children. I like Jarvi's fighting spirit and regret she doesn't see how she can use it to build strong, lively and diverse public schools. *Deborah Meier*

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EDITORIALS.

The Dish on Nancy

Gossip serves as justice in a corrupt world. In a more perfect place, Nancy Reagan would have been brought to trial for crimes against sincerity, candor and taste, and surely judgment would have been terrible and swift. The United States penal code, however, omits such offenses, so there's only Kitty Kelley to even the scales. We can all sleep more easily now that gross hypocrisy has been exposed and moralism revealed as turpitude.

In a real sense, the Reagans are getting the comeuppance they deserve. They created a myth about themselves and their "values" that had a specific purpose of social manipulation and control. Reaganite preachments about drugs, fidelity, volunteerism, charity, common sense and old-fashioned morality were not just broadcast but targeted to a generation, a cultural sensibility and a political class that had very different ideas about how to behave in this day and age. Institutions—schools, foundations, corporations—responded to the Reaganite canon, which is what truly has been politically correct in America since the couple came to power.

Now the myth has been punctured, perhaps for good. Many of the revelations in Kelley's book have been known, or at least suspected, for years, but Americans and their media minders have until now not seen fit to believe them. Exposés have their historic moments, which are impossible to predict. Washington's political set knew all about John Kennedy's wicked ways

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(they called him "Mattress Jack") from the start, and reporters and rival candidates on the 1988 campaign trail bandied about stories of George Bush's extramarital affair(s), which Kelley also retails. But neither of those rumors made a scandal or destroyed the myth. Obviously, the time for Reagan-bashing is now ripe.

Is it just coincidence that not one but two tabloid-quality sensations are now in banner headlines? The media seemed to be suffering from post-bellum depression since the gulf war, and in the unseasonably hot doldrums of April (at least in the Northeast, where the news is made) the doings at the Kennedy compound in Palm Beach and the disclosures about the Reagan White House had a tonic effect.

The Kennedys have hardly been immune from gossip, as the Reagans have, but the current crop of the clan seems to have got what's coming to it. There's a lot of hypocrisy to answer for in the myth of Camelot. It's unclear what happened after Willie Smith's skinny-dip in the wine-dark Atlantic, and someone in the party that night may have to pay with real time. But tabloid gossip will be the only retribution for the crimes against myth, modesty and *mesure* that by any measure have been proved without trial.

It goes without saying that malicious gossip—the kind that Nancy Reagan allegedly spread about many of her closest friends—is hurtful and unjust. But turnabout against hypocrites is always fair play, whatever their politics, and no system yet has devised a more exquisite form of punishment than the unauthorized biography.

'We're No. 1! We're No. 1!'

After years of slipping superiority and encroaching mediocrity, the "We're Number One" ethos is born again in America. General Schwarzkopf assures us we're the world's only superpower; President Bush hails the unique ability of the United States to punish "naked aggression." Germany and Japan, which seemed to be chipping away at our international pre-eminence, have been eclipsed as mere financiers of our mercenary machine.

To be sure, the general's claim that we're Number One is based on military power. By other indicators—for example, rates of infant mortality, literacy and life expectancy—the United States lags far behind other industrialized nations. We also fall behind less-developed countries in a number of areas.

In percentage of 1-year-old children fully immunized against polio we're Number Seventeen, behind such nations as China, Brazil and Bulgaria. Egypt, Jordan and the Soviet Union have a smaller percentage of infants born at low birthweight. Algeria, Morocco and Zimbabwe spend a larger percentage of their G.N.P. on public education. Children in Hungary score better on an international mathematics test. Lebanon, Libya and Cuba have, on average, more teachers for their school-age children.

But don't despair. There are still some areas where the United States is first. Among Western industrialized nations, we're: Number One in percentage of children living below the poverty line, Number One in teen pregnancy, Number One in murders of males between 15 and 24, Number One in murder by handguns for all ages, Number One in percentage of population incarcerated, Number One in percentage of commuter trips made by private auto rather than public transport, Number One in per capita energy consumption and Number One in emissions of air pollutants.

Let's hear it for the U.S.A.!

ANDREW L. SHAPIRO

Andrew L. Shapiro is a Nation *intern.*

Enemies List

The betrayal of the Kurds, while it may not altogether extinguish the afterglow of Desert Shield, will certainly shorten and diminish it. A Gallup poll conducted April 4 to 6 shows a 14 percent drop in public support for George Bush's handling of events in the gulf, and by the time the election season comes around—assuming the Democrats can find a candidate—the benefits of the war may not count for much.

As George Will has noted, there were two Vietnam Syndromes—the fear of quagmires and the reluctance to use force. V.S.I may have led Bush to withhold support from the Kurds. But this only produces a greater clamor from his critics on the right—who compare the abandonment of the Kurds to the Bay of Pigs—for the endlessly repeated purging of V.S.II, with the punitive military strike as a basic instrument of post-cold war policy.

A dilemma, however: The payoff from these splendid little wars in general fades faster than the victors anticipate in their first flush of triumph. (Iraq, given the immense scale of the operation, might have proved the exception, but then came the Kurds.) This in turn gives rise to fresh spasms, the interval between them shrinking along with the public attention span: Grenada 1983, Libya 1986, Panama 1989, Iraq 1991.

Second dilemma: Where to find new targets of opportunity in the post-Communist world, given the dismaying shortage of renegades as obliging as Saddam Hussein. It's necessary here to go back to July 1985, when the Reagan Administration issued its list of "outlaw states." Five countries were listed as members of what Reagan—or Peggy Noonan—called the "strangest collection of misfits, Looney Tunes and squalid criminals since the advent of the Third Reich." One, Iran, seems to be on good behavior these days. Another, Nicaragua, is, as they say, history. Which leaves three—Libya, North Korea and Cuba.

Now, the curious thing is that each of those three has appeared, in the short weeks since the war, in what may be seen as trial balloons floated into the columns of major newspapers by disgruntled conservatives in and around the Administration. First, on March 17, a *New York Times* story cited "in-

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telligence information" suggesting that Libya was increasing production of nerve and mustard gases at its Rabta chemical plant. An attack on Libya seems unlikely, however, since the 1986 airstrikes still count in Washington's official history as a success story, and as a closed chapter.

On April 10 came an intriguing column by the *Times*'s Leslie Gelb on the threat posed by North Korea, "perhaps the most dangerous country in the world today." That piece gave voice to the warning of Defense Secretary Dick Cheney that North Korea, which is soon likely to possess nuclear weapons, is the most probable source of "a no-notice attack against U.S. forces." Yet the notion of North Korea doing anything so foolish seems implausible.

Sandwiched in between, and perhaps most ominous of the three, was an April 1 column in *The Washington Post* by Jeane Kirkpatrick, prompted by the defection to Key West of a Cuban MIG-23 fighter pilot. But was it really a defection, she wondered, or a Cuban probing of U.S. air defenses? To Kirkpatrick, the incident made sense only in the context of two additional facts: the reports last year that Fidel Castro had urged Nikita Khrushchev to launch a pre-emptive nuclear strike against the United States in 1962, and the near completion of Cuba's nuclear power plant at Cienfuegos, which one quoted official had said "could be used to produce weapons-grade plutonium."

Weapons of mass destruction, and the willingness to use them—those are the common notes that these alarm bells sound. Will Saddam Hussein in the end be the man to place the crown on George Bush's head in '92, or might it yet be someone else? Qaddafi? Kim Il Sung? Castro? You choose.

Tale of a Whale

I went to Key West to escape the persistent delusion that the L.A.P.D. tape was in fact a bit of censored footage from the ground war in Iraq. Four days into my recovery, and much cheered by Anthony Lewis's admission that he had perhaps mistakenly encouraged the dreadful carnage of Operation Desert Storm, I awoke to a commotion on the beach adjacent to our rented compound. A half-dozen young people were crouching in the water around what appeared to be a huge black fish. Eager to participate in the marine biology lesson, I waded out but was shooed off by a hulking fellow with a button featuring a ferocious eagle affixed to his bandanna—another Desert Storm reference, I could not help but note. It was a beached pilot whale, he told me impatiently, and no one was allowed in the water or even on the beach.

Hours passed while the officious but otherwise admirable rescue team busied itself spraying, shading and propping up the suicidal whale. I settled in a deck chair to meditate on the psychology that could approve the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of humans and yet rally so nobly to save the life of one poor, stranded mammal. Perhaps I had even misjudged my flag-waving neighbors up north, to whom the entire Persian Gulf venture must have seemed one vast and thoroughly decent rescue mission. The sun was warm, the water turquoise and the whale's benefactors were pleasingly integrated as to race and sex.

Toward noon, as we all awaited the truck or helicopter that was to fetch the whale to some veterinary haven up the Keys, one of the rescuers screamed, "Shark attack!" This was a bizarre and truly alarming turn of events, considering that the whale and its human companions were in no more than three feet of water, a few yards from dry sand belonging to a luxury hotel. Some of the civilian onlookers later claimed to have seen a black object, and perhaps a fin, moving in the water, but there is no doubt about what happened next. The same muscular fellow who had warned me away earlier took up a stick and began to beat the water furiously. A blood-red stain appeared. When the dead "shark" was hauled out, it was revealed to be a baby pilot whale, which the larger one, perhaps encouraged by so much nurturing attention, had trustingly produced.

While the bereft mother was hoisted into a truck with the sinister label "Seafood," I huddled with my friends to discuss the day's impact on the 6-year-old in our company, a lovely child with no prior experience of infanticide. The rescuers' story, it soon emerged, was that the baby whale was premature, stillborn and, anyway, unbruised. I hope, for the sake of our biped species, that an investigation being conducted by the National Marine Fisheries Service bears that out. In the meantime, I take some comfort from the un–Desert Stormlike finale to the frantic scene in the water: Upon seeing the dead baby whale, the man who had beaten the water with a stick, who wore the eagle emblem on his bandanna, ran onto the beach, threw down his stick, collapsed on the sand, pulled his shirt up over his head, and sobbed. BARBARA EHRENREICH

Barbara Ehrenreich's most recent book is The Worst Years of Our Lives *(Pantheon).*

★

A Short Review Of Kitty Kelley's Biography Of Nancy Reagan

Oh, Kitty K., what hast thou wrought?
The dirt that in thy net thou'st caught
Must make the Reagans so distraught.
That Nancy's bad by now we ought
To know. We know the clothes she's bought.
This book, though, hath a bombshell brought:
She's even badder than we thought.

Calvin Trillin

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

The Pulitzer Farce

The odious ritual of self-congratulation by the Fourth Estate known as the Pulitzer Prizes for journalism was as silly as ever.

The prize for commentary went to *The Washington Post*'s Jim Hoagland, his second Pulitzer. Hoagland is a frightful ass. Sample: "A week of war has established a position of American even-handedness and involvement absent from two decades of the 'peace process.' " This kind of prose has carried Hoagland into the cud-chewers' pantheon. If a Pulitzer Prize for commentary and reporting has to be given, it should be awarded (and then retired) to Herb Caen of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, who has just celebrated his 75th birthday, still peppy after all these years—unlike David Shaw of the *Los Angeles Times*, whose perennial lust for a Pulitzer has finally been slaked, though a decent press critic should expect nothing better from a Pulitzer jury than a bullet in the neck.

The Pulitzer for international reporting went to Caryle Murphy of *The Washington Post* and also to Serge Schmemann of *The New York Times*. Murphy happened to be in Kuwait when Iraq invaded and remitted dispatches to her newspaper for a month until her "escape," which seems too strong a word for a journey thousands accomplished without such fanfare.

Though she was in the right place at the right time, Murphy put her good fortune to no profitable use so far as readers were concerned. Her stories were dull and uninformative. Here's a bit of her August 11 report: "A week after the Iraqi invasion, there is no sign of any civil administration—Kuwaiti or Iraqi—in this occupied country of 1.7 million people, where residents nervously await their fate."

If the Pulitzer board and jury were honest, they would have announced that no prize for international reporting would be given this year, in recognition of the cowardly performance of U.S. journalists, editors and publishers in colluding in the mass flight from Baghdad on the eve of the war. This abdication of responsibility, which left only one U.S. unit—that of CNN—in Baghdad surely ranks as one of the most shameful episodes in the history of American journalism.

Serge Schmemann was cited for his reporting on East Germany's collapse and ultimate unification with the West. In my column for April 23 of last year, I quoted Schmemann as saying, in answer to the question, What next for the East German psyche? that "there are potent arguments that the road to finding their footing lies with East Germans' confronting the past under Communism and under Nazism, an era that the leaders of East Germany have previously dismissed as something for which Communists bore no responsibility." I then raised the question of Schmemann confronting his own past and that of his father, Alexander Schmemann, who as head of the Russian Orthodox Church in America joined forces with the fascist Bishop Valerian Trifa in the 1950s, helping the latter wrest control of the Romanian Orthodox Church and forming with him an alliance to create the Orthodox Church of America, under which all Orthodox factions in the country would be subordinated.

As a youth leader in his father's church in the 1960s and '70s Serge Schmemann was an articulate and aggressive proponent of the Trifa-Schmemann consolidation. In 1971 he advanced to the position of co-editor of *Concern*, the youth journal of the O.C.A. One of *Concern*'s most important funders was American Romanian Orthodox Youth, or AROY, a group of people in their 20s, 30s and 40s who swore an oath of personal loyalty to Trifa and to a politico-religious program centering on allegiance to Trifa's faction in the church. AROY was not openly fascist but did provide Trifa his most disciplined core of support. As it happens, AROY was also one of the largest contributors to the elder Schmemann's seminary, which had a monopoly on "licensing" priests of the Russian Orthodox Church. Eventually AROY dominated youth leadership training, insuring that opponents of Trifa would be shut out of the O.C.A.

At the height of young Schmemann's editorship of *Concern*, in August 1972, the *Detroit Free Press* ran an interview with Trifa in which he admitted he had led an anti-Semitic youth group in Romania, a vicious predecessor of AROY, associated with the Iron Guard. In 1941 Trifa's group initiated a pogrom in Bucharest that killed hundreds of people in the most grisly ways. The U.S. Ambassador to Romania at the time reported a raid on the Jewish quarter in which seventy-five to 100 people were rounded up, taken to a kosher butchery and there slaughtered. For a year and a half after the 1972 interview, further exposés appeared in scores of other major newspapers. Meanwhile, at least one Michigan Orthodox Christian parish publicly split from Trifa's episcopate largely because the Trifa-Schmemann axis refused to bring Trifa to account.

In the midst of this storm, Serge Schmemann's *Concern* said nothing. While avoiding the matter of Trifa's war crimes, *Concern* also never distanced itself from Trifa for his contemporary anti-Semitism, as evidenced in his insistence that U.S. universities should restrict the number of Jews admitted; nor did it report anything about the multiple lawsuits and bitter debates then convulsing Orthodox circles.

Such discretion survived Schmemann's youth into his journalistic maturity. In 1988 in the *Times* he criticized *Blowback*, Chris Simpson's book on C.I.A. sponsorship and salvaging of Nazis and Nazi sympathizers, without disclosing such pertinent details as his own family interest or his father's role as a prominent commentator to Eastern Europe over the C.I.A.-backed Radio Liberty.

Deep Throat

It's Dump on Nancy time, but the only people to feel shame should be those who toadied to the Reagans for eight long years, meaning most of the press who went along with the charade, right up to the moment Chief Daryl Gates invited Nancy and the press down to watch the L.A.P.D. conduct a storm-trooper "drug raid" in South-Central Los Angeles.

I've always taken the view that Nancy was good for the country, and astrology merely the lustrous cover for a few women giving sound advice. Nancy was a fine actress in the Brechtian manner. She said the lines, but she also made it

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plain to the audience that she thought the lines were ridiculous. It was Nancy who urged R.R. to dump Al Haig, too late to stop him from plotting with Israel the invasion of northern Lebanon but soon enough to prevent this mad general from starting a naval embargo of Cuba. It was Nancy who bid R.R. to Moscow to hatch peace with Gorbachev (and look where it got us, but that's another story).

In the *New York Post* for April 10, Amy Pagnozzi had a strong column discussing Kitty Kelley's accounts of R.R.'s rape of Selene Walters and grudging payment for an abortion for Jacqueline Park back in the early 1950s:

> Afterward Reagan played dumb to the pain he'd caused Walters, just as he played dumb when Park had her illegal abortion—just as he played dumb during the Iran-Contra scandal. . . . And Nancy is supposed to be the master manipulator, running everything? The truth is, Ronald Reagan was never simple, or even the bad actor he was made out to be—he was just, simply, bad. And despite the conclusion in Kelley's book—that Nancy Reagan *was* the president—her main role has really been to allow her husband to play victim instead of the victimizer—first politically, and now, again, where women are concerned.

Maxwell Was Here

Nothing about the purchase of the New York *Daily News* by Robert Maxwell was stranger than the labeling of this publishing tycoon as a socialist. Let the deluded call Art Romero, now a printer at the Los Angeles *Daily News* (no relative, corporate or otherwise).

Romero used to be shop steward at Alcogravure Printing in North Hollywood, where he worked for twenty-seven years. Maxwell took over in late December 1987. The plant ran normally for a while—three shifts, twenty-four hours a day.

On May 1, 1988, Romero was asked to hire ten more journeymen and nineteen or twenty more trainees. There was going to be much more work, he was told; the plant was going to run seven days a week. He started hiring. Then management told him that there was so much work coming up, it would be best if some of the guys "got their vacations out of the way." Fifteen of them, including Romero, took vacation beginning May 21.

Five days later Romero came back to work. At 10 A.M. a new trainee was hired. At 2:45 Romero was called into a meeting and told that the plant was closing, that he should clear out in ten minutes. The company moved operations to nonunion shops in Richmond and Dallas. Romero was out of work for sixteen months. Among his former co-workers there were a number of divorces, families split up by sudden money problems or impossible commutes. One worker tried to commit suicide. When he heard all the promises—the seven-day week and all the work to come—he'd run out and bought a new car. "It was loaded," Romero recalls, "everything you could possibly buy, he had it. He hadn't even made his first payment when the plant was closed." Soon after the North Hollywood shop was shut, Maxwell closed the Chicago branch of Alcogravure, which was also unionized. On March 1, 1990, he sold the whole company to a Canadian firm.

Voices From Beyond the Grave

I was sad to see Graham Greene go. He was one of my father's oldest friends. Greene's father, James, was headmaster of Berkhamsted, which both Graham and my father attended. James Greene's powerful denunciations of modern civilization in its downward trend no doubt helped propel both of them toward therapeutic ideologies.

When my mother was on her deathbed in the Mercy Hospital in Cork in the autumn of 1989, I read to her portions of Greene's interview with John Cornwell on the subject of his beliefs, published in *The Observer* for September 24 of that year. She listened keenly, and so did the four other ladies, all of them devout Catholics, in the small ward.

" 'And what about Satan? Do you believe in the devil or in demons?' " I kept my voice low, not wishing to upset the rest of the ward.

" 'No, I don't think so.' "

"What did Graham say?" my mother asked. "I didn't quite hear."

"He said, No he didn't think so," I said more loudly.

" 'Do you believe in hell?' " I read on.

" 'I don't believe in hell.' "

"I didn't hear that either," my mother said.

"He says he doesn't believe in hell." There was sepulchral silence in the ward.

" 'Do you contemplate God in a pure, disembodied way?' "

" 'I'm afraid I don't.' " I bellowed this, to spare my mother the inconvenience of asking me to repeat it.

Sister Joan came in and sank to her knees. It was the hour for her to lead the ward in reciting Hail Marys. My mother and I kept quiet in our corner of the room.

Later I came across my father's description of Greene's conversion to Catholicism, as tape-recorded in our house in Ardmore by Greene's biographer Norman Sherry in 1977, four years before my father died in St. Finbar's, not so far across town from the Mercy:

> Quite early on, Graham said to me that he had fallen madly in love with this girl, but she wouldn't go to bed with him unless he married her. So I said, "Well, there are lots of other girls in the world, but still if that's the way you feel, well go ahead and marry her. What difference does it make?" And then he came back and said (this went on over quite a number of weeks), "The trouble is that she won't marry me unless I become a Catholic." I said, "Why not? If you're so obsessed with this girl, you've got to get it out of your system." He was rather shocked, because he said, "You of all people, a noted atheist." I said, "Yes, because you're the one that's superstitious, because I don't think it matters. If you worry about becoming a Catholic, it means you take it seriously, and you think there is something there." I said, "Go right ahead—take instruction or whatever balderdash they want you to go through, if you need this for your fuck, go ahead and do it. . . ." And then to my amazement, the whole thing suddenly took off and became serious and he became a Catholic convert. So then I felt perhaps I'd done the wrong thing.

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BELTWAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN

■ A Real Civics Lesson

Promoting democracy worldwide can sometimes be a messy business. That's what investigators from the General Accounting Office learned when they took a good look at the books of the National Endowment for Democracy. The N.E.D., a foundation created and funded by Congress ostensibly to strengthen democratic institutions around the globe, has since 1984 handed out $152 million in grants to foreign political groups, often with a neoconservative twist [see Corn, "Foreign Aid for the Right," December 18, 1989]. The G.A.O. concluded that the N.E.D. has failed to monitor its programs closely and that many of its recipients have not properly managed their finances. Of the thirty-six N.E.D. projects investigated—which together absorbed $20 million—only one had been evaluated adequately.

Given the absence of strict monitoring, it was not surprising that the G.A.O. discovered many cases of misused funds. Sometimes expense accounts were not accurately kept. One group applied $10,000 in grant money toward office renovation without obtaining approval. Another lent N.E.D. funds to an employee. It also rented a car for someone who was later arrested for drug dealing, and then it spent $1,500 in N.E.D. moneys to cover the rental fees for the impounded vehicle. This is petty graft. More troubling was what the G.A.O. saw—or didn't see—in Portugal. The case involved the General Workers Union of Portugal and a $2.6 million contribution administered through the Free Trade Union Institute, a foreign policy arm of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., which manages at least 40 percent of the N.E.D.'s grants. After the institute had not done an audit, G.A.O. investigators went to check on how the money had been spent. But the local labor union officials were uncooperative. The G.A.O. asked F.T.U.I. to assist, but the institute was not able to persuade its Portuguese comrades-in-democracy to supply financial records to the watchdogs of Congress.

In a response to the report, the N.E.D. notes that the groups it supports are mostly small activist organizations working under trying circumstances. But some of its recipients are clearly learning one vital lesson of U.S.-style democracy: Taxpayer dollars dispensed in an atmosphere of lax oversight are funds just waiting to be burned.

■ Tusks and Torture

Tucked away in the foreign aid bill Congress passed last year is a small provision now provoking consternation among human rights activists. It reads simply that "not less than $15,000,000 shall be made available to countries in Africa for programs which support conservation and biological diversity." That sounds fine. But the fear is that these few lines were designed, in part, for the benefit of the abusive regime of Daniel arap Moi of Kenya.

In the same bill, Congress prohibited dispatching any economic or military assistance to Kenya unless President Bush certifies that the Moi government is moving to release political prisoners, cease physical abuse in its jails, re-establish the independence of the judiciary and restore freedom of expression. Not even the savviest wordsmiths of the White House could find a way to craft such an assurance. The legislation was intended to codify a freeze on already-approved military aid, which Bush had imposed last summer under pressure from Congress. In February, however, the Bush Administration unfroze $5 million of those funds after Kenya provided sanctuary to a group of Libyan exiles who, trained by the C.I.A. to overthrow Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, were routed by Libyan government forces.

The environmental provision may offer a slippery way to funnel more money to Kenya. The $15 million is to be drawn on the account of the foreign military financing program, which is subject to the human rights condition. But friends of the Kenyan government are expected to argue that since the money is not going to military ends, the human rights provision does not apply. A staff member of the Senate foreign operations subcommittee rejects that interpretation, but an aide to Senator Bob Kasten, the ranking Republican on the subcommittee and sponsor of the measure, says that Kasten expects Kenya will receive some portion of the money. The Washington director of Human Rights Watch, Holly Burkhaldter, frets that if Kenya is allotted any of this aid, the funds, though earmarked for environmental projects, may end up with the military. "This whole thing," she exclaims, "really has to do with the friends of Moi in Congress trying to find him an aid lifeline, under the very clever guise of protecting wild animals."

■ Flacks, Hacks and Iraq

David Evans has a good idea. For twenty years he served in the Marines; for four of those he was an analyst in the office of Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. Then in 1986 he left the service and shortly after that became the military affairs and national security correspondent of the *Chicago Tribune*. But Evans is no Pentagon loyalist. At a recent forum on press restrictions set by the military during the gulf war, he recalled that when he was reporting from the region he was shocked by how many public affairs officers were deployed by the military. "We're talking about hundreds of people at the squadron, wing command and ship level." These flacks, he noted, constitute "a professional cadre of commissioned officers whose job it is to protect their institution." His modest proposal: Get rid of them. He suggests that Congress remove all the funds that pay for these low-level career mouthpieces: "It's not appropriate for taxpayers to fund thought police."

At the same conference, Tony Millen, a U.P.I. correspondent who was also in the gulf, noted that he and other U.P.I. reporters asked for their stories to be preceded by a notice saying their dispatches were censored by the U.S. military. But the brass at the wire service thought it wiser not to enter into a pissing match with the Pentagon. Millen was not in good spirits as he recalled how the media capitulated to the military's campaign to control journalists. "The moment we acceded to the pool system," he said with sadness, "we surrendered our independence."

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Caveat Emptor

EDWARD SOREL

WHEN THIS CATALOGUE ARRIVED AND I SAW ITS "DESERT STORM" COLLECTION I SAID TO MYSELF, WHY NOT DO YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING EARLY?
THE COCKPIT
FOR MARGE I GOT THIS "DESERT SHIELD" STAINLESS STEEL WRISTWATCH WITH A PALM TREE AND AMERICAN FLAG ON ITS FACE.
FOR JUNIOR I ORDERED A "DESERT CAMO RECON VEST" WITH MULTIPLE POCKETS AND A DESERT STORM PATCH.*
OPERATION
IRAQ
KUWAIT
SAUDI ARABIA
DESERT STORM
*SOLD SEPARATELY
FOR MY NIECE I GOT THIS "DON'T MESS WITH U.S." T-SHIRT.
DON'T
MESS WITH US
FOR DAD I ORDERED THIS HAND-CARVED, HAND-PAINTED STEALTH BOMBER.
AND FOR MURRAY DOWN AT THE SHOP, THIS "DESERT STORM" CALENDAR OF REALLY GREAT-LOOKIN' GALS.
DESERT STORM 1992 CALENDAR
BUT NOW THESE GIFTS SEEM STUPID. THE KURDS ARE DYING 'CAUSE THEY COUNTED ON US, THAT BASTARD HUSSEIN IS STILL IN POWER AND KUWAIT STILL AIN'T NO DEMOCRACY.
NOW BUSH SAYS HE NEVER INTENDED TO PUSH DEMOCRACY ON KUWAIT OR TO GET RID OF SADDAM... JEEZUS...
...WHY THE HELL COULDN'T HE SAY THAT BEFORE I BOUGHT ALL THIS CRAP?!!
E.S.

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ARTICLES.

CONGRESSIONAL FOLLIES

The Great Crime-Bill Show of '91

DAVID CORN

Willie Horton. Willie Horton. Willie Horton. Have a friend shout those words at you a few hundred times, and then you may have some sense of what the average Democratic member of Congress hears when politics turns toward the subject of crime. It's one of those issues—a wedge issue, the Republicans gleefully call it—that drive Democrats mad. It's their own fault, since the party has not yet figured out how to respond effectively to the bloodlust-driven offerings of its rivals. So it was not shocking that once President Bush finished vanquishing Iraq (and cowing the Democrats), he demonstrated that he was not ignoring domestic issues by unveiling another anticrime package and initiating what's become an annual ritual of rhetorical silliness: the crime-bill debate.

The theme of the Bush package, once again, is punishment. As he did last year, Bush proposes expanding the federal death penalty, limiting death-row appeals and allowing prosecutors to use illegally obtained evidence in court. The Democrats counter: yes, but . . . After Bush unveiled his legislation, Senator Joseph Biden, chair of the Judiciary Committee, took to the Senate floor supposedly to criticize the Bush plan. He did so by seconding the call for more capital punishment, for fewer death-penalty appeals and for admitting tainted evidence. His own anticrime bill, Biden boasted, boosts the number of federal capital offenses to forty-four, "more than what the President is proposing." His "but" is composed of criticism of Bush for opposing an assault-rifle ban and for doing nothing to increase the number of cops. Biden's alternative package authorizes funds for thousands of new police officers, F.B.I. agents and other law-enforcement officials.

Biden is trying to out-G.O.P. the G.O.P. He has thrown some decent measures into the mix, such as the Violence Against Women Act (a collection of measures to help prevent rape and toughen punishment for rapists) and the Racial Justice Act (which would allow capital offenders to use statistics to demonstrate that the death penalty is applied in a discriminatory fashion). Still, he is arguing on his opponents' terms, and Republicans, who are more adept at demagogy, will maintain a natural advantage as long as the emotional issue of crime is discussed predominantly in terms of revenge and enforcement.

Last year, the crime bill collapsed after both the Senate and the House of Representatives passed their own versions. In conference, Republican senators would not accept the racial justice act included in the House bill, House Democrats objected to provisions that limited death-row appeals and House members of both parties refused to accept a Senate-passed ban on the production and sale of semiautomatic weapons. The same knotty disputes are likely to dominate again this year and push aside consideration of any comprehensive anticrime strategy.

Biden's attempt to plagiarize much of Bush's rap perpetuates the grand charade of anticrime policy: that killing criminals and uncuffing police will reduce street crime. The annual crime debate is a large exercise in avoidance. The causes of crime is a taboo subject. Politicians dare not raise it, for they risk being labeled wimps and pamperers of murderers, rapists, thieves and drug pushers. Instead, the discourse concentrates on such controversies as whether capital offenders who are mentally retarded should be killed, as if that would lower the crime rate.

Conspicuous by its absence is any real examination of crime prevention. Biden does present gun control and more cops as preventive measures. Conservatives claim that tough enforcement and sanctions deter malefactors, and they're happy to stick stiff penalties to gun-toting criminals (rather than limit access to guns). But talk of preventing crime at its origins is practically nowhere to be found on Capitol Hill.

It may sound like do-good, liberal dogma, but anticrime policy should aim at the causes of crime.

At the recent Senate confirmation hearing of drug czar Robert Martinez, both the unwillingness of the political class to consider the roots of crime and the Administration's antipathy to before-the-crime prevention were on clear display. Throughout Martinez's daylong testimony, not a word was breathed about the reasons people abuse drugs and thus engage in and support criminal activity. Understanding the motives of drug abusers might be of some use to a drug czar, but causation is out—even for aggressive liberals like Senators Ted Kennedy and Howard Metzenbaum, who beat up on Martinez for other reasons. These two would only go so far as to note the connection between social policy and crime in urging more money for drug treatment programs. In the Senate, Kennedy has repeatedly criticized Bush's national drug policy for spending more on enforcement and interdiction than on treatment and education. (Kennedy and a few others on the Hill are promoting legislation to increase drug rehab programs in prisons; they are quite rightly championing such proposals as anticrime measures.) Confronted by Kennedy, Martinez obligingly maintained that he favored more funding for treatment. But that claim does not square with his performance as Governor of drug-besieged Florida from 1987 to 1991; he poured money into enforcement but kept funding for treatment at a relatively low level.

Martinez personifies the Bush approach to crime. The President has hailed him for signing 130 death warrants and im-

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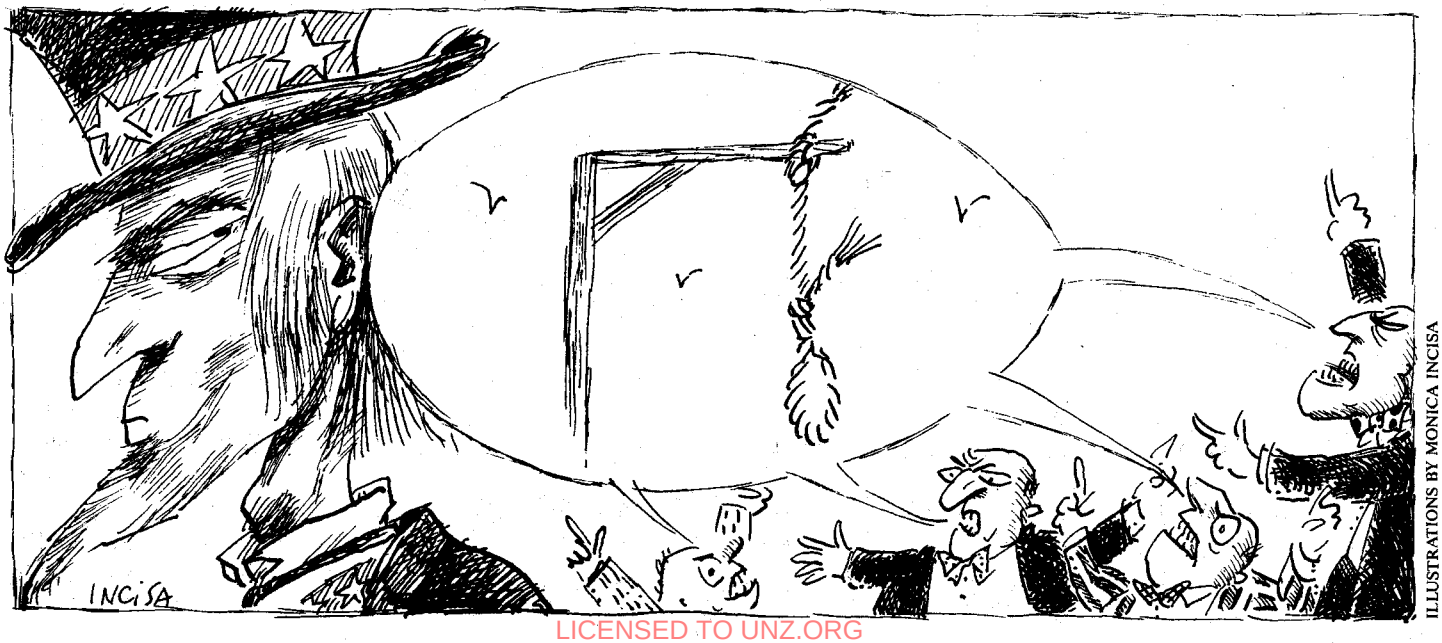
plementing get-tough antidrug policies while Governor. Martinez sought and obtained from the state legislature a mandatory minimum three-year penalty for drug possession under certain circumstances. Naturally, this led to an enormous increase in the number of drug offenders sent to Florida's already overcrowded prisons. In the same period, not coincidentally, the state was forced to launch the nation's most ambitious early release program in order to make room for the incoming convicts. The result: During the Martinez years, the average murder sentence in Florida decreased by 40 percent and recidivism increased. More in, more out, more crime.

During the hearing, Martinez found himself roped in by the White House's enmity toward gun control. In Florida he did support the establishment of a waiting period for purchasers of certain guns—one of the mildest gun-control reforms—but he testified that he opposes a federal law creating the same. Asked about the prospect that would-be gun buyers might cross state lines to obtain weapons, he replied that there was no reason to worry since "the bulk of the people will buy their weapon, you know, in their own neighborhood." He also expressed doubt that banning assault weapons would reduce violent crime. Criminals, he explained, would turn to other weapons such as "a handgun, a knife, some blunt weapon." Martinez went on to compare assault weapons to pesticides: "We have had as a people a history that when something is believed to be injurious, whether we are talking chemicals or whatever else, often instead of banning, we highly regulate and place penalties for use of that chemical or instrument." And though he has supported expanded drug testing—including tests for new Florida citizens who apply for certain kinds of driver's licenses—he rejected the suggestion that gun buyers be tested. He explained that it was only natural that newcomers be tested since "there is little that is known about the individual." Martinez's perspective on drugs and crime is severely limited.

The Democrats might be able to score political points with their advocacy of certain gun-control measures and drug rehab in prisons (as a way of decreasing the number of addict-thugs on the streets). These programs, however, represent only a small dose of prevention. It may sound like do-good, liberal dogma, but anticrime policy should aim at the causes of crime: poverty, a failing education system, joblessness, social decay and alienation. Since the 1960s—especially during the Reagan years—conservatives have ridiculed and scorned such a liberal attitude. And they triumphed. When was the last time you heard a major political leader in Washington talk about conditions in the inner cities and tie them to crime? The political culture allows little space for such talk, and the Democrats, as a party, have done nothing to buck the tide.

One does not have to be a leftist ideologue to lament the narrowness of the crime debate. Late last year the Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation—funded in part by a host of major corporations—released a report that called for a massive "reconstruction of urban life" as the way to reduce crime. The foundation, which is a private-sector re-creation of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence established by President Lyndon Johnson in 1968, did not shy away from estimating a price tag: $10 billion each year for this decade. This would cover new funds for social programs carefully tailored for so-called high-risk children. The money would support preschool education for all eligible children (that's nearly $5 billion in itself), various job-training programs and more funds (at least $2 billion per year) for drug treatment and counseling. The foundation notes that its $10 billion wish list does not include funds for better housing and schools, which are essential parts of its crime reduction plan. Invest in cities and kids, the report said, and the return will be a better society and less crime.

Does Joe Biden have the guts to speak so plainly about crime? If the goal truly is to decrease crime, programs that educate, house and employ are just as crucial as effective sentencing, enforcement and rehabilitation measures. But they need to be advocated as such, and with the same force that Republican Senator Strom Thurmond applies to his crusade to execute retarded criminals. And they must be sold to a public that is enraged and frightened by crime and skeptical of government. Even before that pitch is made, a politician must admit an unpretty truth: The federal government,



ILLUSTRATIONS BY MONICA INCISA

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in the immediate sense, cannot do a lot to decrease street crime. Demagogues can flail their arms, fry (or gas or poison) more criminals and promote prosecution of those few cases that heretofore were jeopardized by police misconduct. Congress and the White House, however, can do the most good by forgoing instant gratification and tackling long-term matters that affect the social fabric. But few, if any, politicians in Washington are tough enough to support that common-sense message and be heard above the cries of the tough-guy executioners. □

CROSSING A 'RIVER OF BLOOD'

Shining Path Is Gaining in Peru

ROBIN KIRK

Huaycán, Peru

The entrance to Huaycán is a single dirt road an hour's drive east of Lima's central plaza. A luxury housing development marks the turnoff. Huaycán itself is visible from the crest of a sudden rise; one sees a huge desert valley holding one of Lima's newest and most turbulent squatter settlements, known as *pueblos jóvenes* (literally, young towns).

It is an improbable site for homes. There is no running water, sewage system or greenery, just forbidding rock and dust, hours from the nearest job or hospital. But Peru's poor have little choice. The shantytown was founded in 1984, when families, many of them migrants from the highlands, invaded the valley and built huts of cardboard and straw mats.

Military families once lived in the luxury homes. They were attracted by the open space and sun, a precious combination in cramped, gray Lima. But a while ago—no one quite remembers when—the dagger-top gates of the compound were chained shut. The concrete walls now bear a message: the red hammer and sickle of the Communist Party of Peru, better known as the Sendero Luminoso, or Shining Path.

Huaycán is a key front in the Shining Path's war to win Peru. In their words, it is a link in the iron chain they will use to strangle "official" Lima—the government ministries, the banks, the military's Allied Command, the shopping malls that could be in Miami but for the bomb-sniffing dogs and power outages, which come when the guerrillas blow up the electrical towers that feed that metropolis of 7 million.

One must understand Huaycán's importance if one is to begin to answer the question of who supports the Shining Path and what is behind the organization's unprecedented advance since its declaration of war on Peru's democratically elected government a decade ago. The genius of the movement is its ability to exploit a class no one else took seriously—young, provincial mestizos, who make up the majority of Peru's population yet face the darkest future.

Robin Kirk, a contributing editor of Pacific News Service, writes frequently for American newspapers.

These young mestizos formed the core of the emerging Shining Path in the 1960s and 1970s, when it was one of several radical communist groups active at San Cristóbal de Huamanga University (U.N.S.C.H.) in Ayacucho, the capital of the department of the same name. One of Peru's poorest regions, the dry, desolate highlands of Ayacucho have a standard of living closer to that of sub-Saharan Africa than coastal Peru. For the sons and daughters of peasants, a university degree was a way out, the hope of penetrating the powerful *criollo* (white) power circles that have always run the country.

But South Africa is Peru's closest parallel when it comes to race. No legal system of discrimination exists, but de facto racism against *cholos*—the brown-skinned mestizos who come from the highlands and often speak with a Quechua accent—is ubiquitous. These new professionals discovered that the doors to power remained closed. They had degrees, but no jobs.

Some discovered a compelling new "science" in the teachings of former U.N.S.C.H. philosophy professor Abimael Guzmán, the Shining Path's founder. Guzmán believes Peru is ripe for a Maoist revolution based on encirclement of the cities from the countryside. Colleagues remember him as a fierce political infighter, a dour, moon-faced ideologue whose pronouncements often degenerated into the redolent name-calling that still characterizes Shining Path tracts. The richest images—"reactionary sewers" and "sewer-drenched scribblers"—are reserved for rivals on the left. Provincial youths, at the bottom of Peru's rigidly hierarchical society, were told that they could invert the social pyramid and rule the country if they applied Guzmán's formula.

"In effect, Guzmán has transformed this class into the strongest political movement in Peru's history," says Carlos Iván Degregori, an anthropologist who taught at U.N.S.C.H. and author of a recent book on the guerrillas' rise.

Young *cholos* in the jacket, jeans and sneakers now considered the unofficial *senderista* uniform are the stuff of every morning's news. They are arrested painting slogans, fabricating bombs, riding in stolen pickups with a load of dynamite and fliers. Their ability to move freely between the seemingly impermeable sectors of Peruvian society—from teacher to coca farmer to shantytown dweller to peasant—has proved one of the Shining Path's most durable strengths.

Gustavo Gorriti, a Peruvian journalist who has just finished a three-volume history of the movement, calls them "the obedient children, the silent, meticulous and hard-working ones. Not the ones whose charisma provoked devotion, but rather their families' silent esteem."

Flor, 20, was raised on a farm near the northern town of Chota. She says she chose nursing as a career because she wanted to do something about a country that employs more Lima hospital administrators than rural doctors and nurses. A teacher recruited her to the Shining Path. Police say she carried out several bombings in the provincial capital of Cutervo, in northern Peru, before her arrest last June.

Her powerful, compact body is typical of peasant women, but she keeps her hair city-short. Despite the shortage of water in the prison where she is awaiting trial, she is neat in her skirt and flip-flops and well fed as a result of the strict regimen

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If you've ever thought of helping the Israeli peace-forces, now is the time. Though one might have hoped that the aftermath of the Gulf War would create conditions for Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has made it clear that he will reject any negotiations based on the principle of exchanging land for peace. Many Israeli doves, believing that only US pressure could impact on Shamir's intransigence, hope that we in the Diaspora will support moves for peace. But what kind of pressure should be applied, how to coordinate it with the needs of the Israeli peace movement, and how to avoid unintentionally aiding the anti-Semitism and Israel-bashing that have recently surfaced in some sectors of the Left—these questions need the kind of serious reflection that will take place at this conference.

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maintained by *senderista* prisoners. Until she has stood trial and been convicted, she refers only indirectly to the party and will not admit openly to her membership.

"The Shining Path is well organized, and unlike other groups that preach revolution it shows with deeds, not with words," Flor says. She was tortured and raped by police after her arrest, a practice human rights groups say is common. For her, however, such treatment is a part of a cadre's training. "There is no struggle without dead and wounded," she says flatly. "They are planting a hate that will eventually rise up and defeat them. Vengeance is sweet."

'Shining Path is well organized, and unlike other groups that preach revolution it shows with deeds, not with words.'

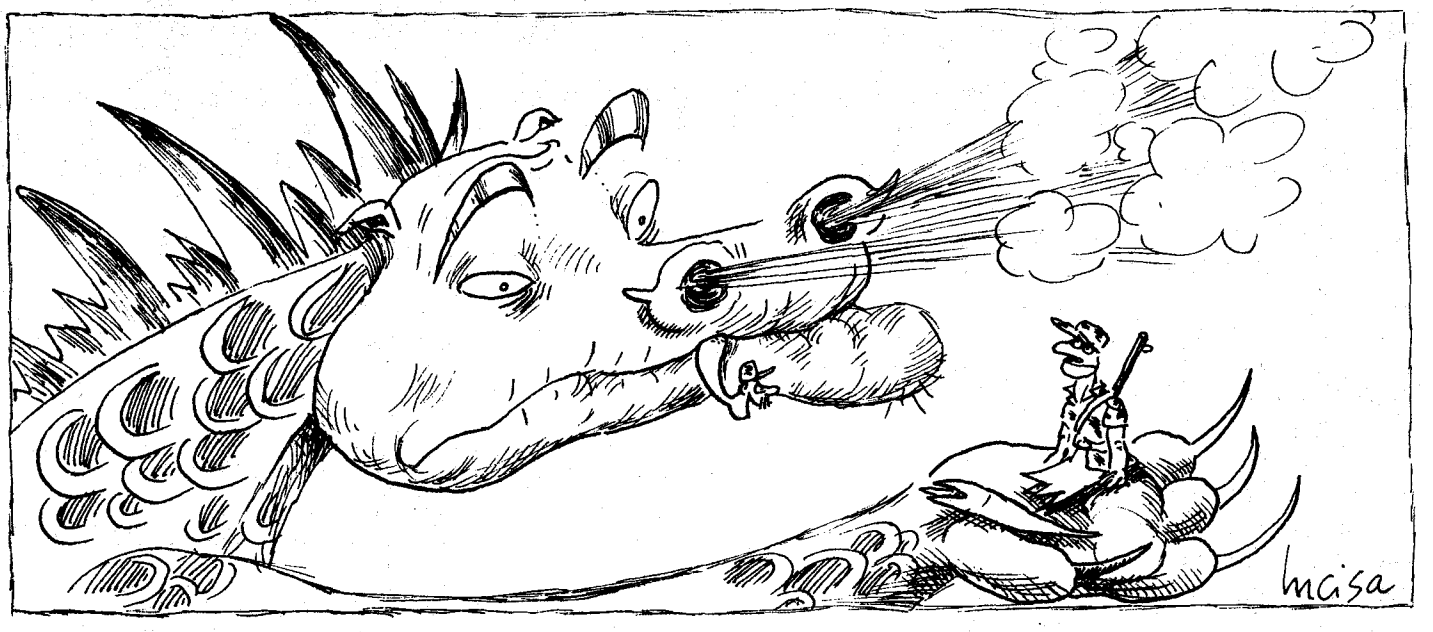
To join, cadres must agree to the *cuota*—the blood price—giving their lives to the cause. They also learn to kill methodically and without mercy. The organization itself is based on clandestine cells, where no individual member knows more than a few other adherents. Front groups—for instance, the pro-Shining Path weekly *El Diario*, Socorro Popular (Popular Assistance) and various "movements" of workers, neighbors' associations and peasants—are meant to prepare the ground for the advance of a "popular army" that will eventually seize power.

Even the Shining Path's jealously guarded inner circle reflects its broad national base. Osmán Morote, the Shining Path's second-in-command, who was recently sentenced to twenty years in prison, is from an old Ayacucho family. But Antonio Díaz Martinez, a fellow U.N.S.C.H. professor and Shining Path leader killed in a 1986 prison uprising, was from the same northern district as Flor. Guzmán, now known as "President Gonzalo," is himself from Arequipa, the birthplace of novelist and recent presidential candidate Mario Vargas Llosa. (Ironically, Guzmán is reputed to suffer from a red-blood-cell imbalance that makes it impossible for him to stay for long in *senderista* mountain strongholds without suffering serious migraines and attacks of psoriasis.)

In February, President Alberto Fujimori went on TV to present a recently captured video of Guzmán, who went underground in 1979. Against the deep shadows of the amateur video, Guzmán, portly in a tailored Mao jacket, dances a Greek sirtaki (it was the rage in 1970s Ayacucho) with other similarly dressed cadres. Their starry-eyed worship of the self-proclaimed "fourth sword of Communism" is plain. Fujimori wanted to show the guerrilla leader in his cups, carousing in a house that most Shining Path cadres would enter only as maids or delivery boys. Perhaps some were dismayed. But Fujimori also showed a Guzmán alive and well and directing his war under the nose of the security forces. The house where the video was filmed is four blocks from the Ministry of War and in a neighborhood favored by high-level military officers. Police speculate that the video was meant to form part of some future museum of the party's struggle before victory. "We not only saw our dear President Gonzalo alive and well," one cadre later told me, "but we saw it for free."

Today, the Shining Path is capable of launching coordinated actions from northern Peru 1,200 miles south to the Peru-Bolivia border. In the Upper Huallaga Valley, where more than half of the coca refined into U.S.-bound cocaine is grown, they have proved flexible enough to put aside their otherwise puritanical moral code to form an alliance with coca growers in exchange for a healthy cut of the profits.

From the beginning, Guzmán planned Shining Path violence to provoke the state into sudden, ill-considered repression. In his always baroque imagery, this meant crossing a "river of blood" to victory. Playing into Guzmán's hands, the military took control of Ayacucho under state-of-emergency legislation in 1982. A campaign of indiscriminate repression, in which the civilian population itself was the target, resulted, like the proverbial dragon's teeth, in more Shining Path



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militants. Within the first months, human rights groups were flooded with reports of extrajudicial executions, massacres and "disappearances." The emergency zone now encompasses more than 42 percent of Peru, including Lima, and includes more than 50 percent of the population, according to Peru's Commission for Human Rights.

Human rights violations have grown at the same rate and are committed in an atmosphere of absolute impunity. According to Father Roger Demartigny, director of the church-sponsored Pucallpa Human Rights Commission, which gathers information about that jungle diocese, military helicopters are now dumping over marshes people arrested as suspected subversives, after stuffing their mouths with explosives. Recently, Gen. José Valdivia—charged with the massacre of twenty-eight peasants in the highland village of Cayara and the subsequent killings of all but one of the witnesses—was promoted to the powerful post of head of the military region that includes Lima.

Unlike their predecessors, the newest cadres no longer come primarily from universities but, rather, directly from high school. Some children are forcibly incorporated into guerrilla columns and made to perform acts of terror that forever bind them to the movement, such as firing the pistol that kills the accused in "popular trials." A recent Shining Path evaluation of a decade of war, written by Guzmán and captured by police, complains that new recruits, while enthusiastic, are also increasingly illiterate.

What the Shining Path cannot win by persuasion it takes by force. The most frequent victims are peasants who resist joining the organization or who fight it in the civil defense committees the military has formed throughout the southern highlands. In the River Ene Valley in the Junín jungle, cadres have pitted native peoples against one another and against jungle colonists or migrants from the highlands in one of the bloodiest chapters yet in the Shining Path campaign to dominate areas it considers strategically crucial. Guerrillas make special targets of town authorities, rivals in the local left, indigenous leaders, engineers—anyone who, even unwittingly, stands in their way.

Such was the case of Sister Agustina "Aguchita" Rivas, a 70-year-old nun who had worked for the past three years in the Junín village of La Florida. A Shining Path detachment, including boys and girls ranging in age from 12 to 17, called a mandatory meeting in the central plaza last September 27. According to witnesses, Aguchita was in the middle of a candy-making class, so was slow in coming. A female cadre reported that "this nun did not obey me." In fact, cadres were looking for the Mother Superior, who had taken an unexpected trip. Sister Aguchita was made to stand against a wall with five others, and all were shot. These were the charges against her: working with the Asháninkas, a local indigenous group, speaking of peace but doing nothing, working with the state-run development office, distributing free food and distracting children with sweets.

This year, guerrilla columns up to 200 strong have faced off against military detachments, giving life to the penultimate stage of Guzmán's step-by-step plan—the "strategic equilibrium," when Shining Path bands are converted into powerful

2
by Zygmunt Bauman

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military units. But to bid seriously for power, the Shining Path must win Lima. A third of the population lives here, an estimated 70 percent of them in shantytowns like Huaycán. According to the Peruvian Senate's special committee on political violence, 71 percent of the actions carried out by the Shining Path are in Lima and along the highly urbanized coast.

Huaycán is strategically located on Lima's central highway. It could therefore control the flow to the capital of most of its food as well as a high percentage of the central sierra's mining wealth, which gives Peru more than 50 percent of its income. Also, the central sierra's huge hydroelectric plants supply Lima with half of its electrical power. Blackouts—guerrillas recently blew up four electrical towers, leaving Lima without power for twenty-four hours—are a fact of life from Chiclayo in the north through Lima to the Nazca lines, and as far east as Tingo María, in the heart of the Upper Huallaga Valley.

Despite these gains, the number of Peruvians who support the Shining Path remains small in most of the country. Peru has long been a country of diverse legal political options, and the Shining Path has always had difficulty winning converts where strong, independent organizations already exist.

However, the victory of political newcomer Fujimori in last year's presidential election also meant a humiliating defeat for Peru's legal left, formerly the Shining Path's most tenacious competitor at the grass-roots level. Fujimori was able to capture the vote of the small entrepreneurs who work outside the formal sector of Peru's economy—an estimated 70 percent of the population—while the left remained mired in old sectarian squabbles.

The economic shock-therapy program imposed by Fujimori just two weeks after taking office has further weakened political alternatives. Fujimori has made no effort to hide the fact that the army is his administration's main ally, and he has shown himself ready to use it to suppress legal protest. Predictably, the shock, coming on the heels of more than a decade of economic decline, has fallen most heavily on the poor. For instance, a migrants' association that for years resisted Shining Path attempts at infiltration finally dissolved last August because the members, many of them from Huaycán, could no longer afford the round-trip bus fare of 300,000 intis (30 cents) to get to weekly meetings.

The guerrillas' brutal campaign of murder as a means to power flourishes where other alternatives have vanished. Recently, the Shining Path won control of several neighbors' associations in Lima *pueblos jóvenes*. Cadres march openly in Huaycán's central avenue at night. Crowds of *senderistas* have carried out daytime actions in Villa El Salvador, another huge shantytown.

Victory is not near for them. But "President Gonzalo" never said it would be quick or cheap. In a speech given to close the Shining Path's first military school in 1980, he said it would take "fifty years to sweep away imperialism and all exploiters." As yet, Fujimori has proposed no coherent plan to combat the Shining Path. To the contrary, he has tried to extend the security forces' impunity in the emergency zones by proposing a presidential decree that would protect them from any prosecution for human rights violations. It's the kind of move that feeds only hate, and therefore the Shining Path. "The killing machine" (the words are Guzmán's) is ready to roll down another decade, pulling Peru ever deeper into a vacuum of violence and counterviolence, where no one is really in control. In the end, that is what Guzmán wants—for there to be nothing, and in that nothing, to rule. □

Intellectuals

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

tionized French poetry. Rimbaud died in 1891 and, although his centennial does not match the Mozart celebrations—since poetry books do not sell like CDs—it is still quite an occasion here. His famous forecast came to mind during the forty days in which the coalition forces bombed a country back to the Middle Ages, killing an incalculable number of soldiers and civilians. Uncalculated may be a better word than incalculable, since no effort has been made—quite the contrary—to tell us how many Iraqis were massacred, possibly 100,000 or more, in that short lapse of time. The objection will be raised that Iraqis grew used to slaughter under Saddam Hussein; more than a million died, after all, on both sides in the protracted war with Iran. Some of those dead, it should be remembered, were exterminated with our weapons; but this new massacre is entirely our handiwork.

The facts and figures are kept secret for reasons that are not hard to find. They would destroy the image of a clean, clinical conflict, bloody the legend of a just war and disturb the clever talk about the resulting peace in the Middle East. Only once, on the penultimate day of the war, were we shown the burned carcasses of cars and personal belongings, scattered as the fleeing Iraqis were bombed and strafed in a "turkey shoot" [see Christopher Hitchens, "Minority Report," March 25]. It was imperative, however, to stop this impression of a massacre from spreading: Since most people are shocked by the concrete image of death, it would have spoiled the great jingoist celebration. Rimbaud, incidentally, had words for this, too: "Ma patrie se lève, j'aime mieux la voir assise"—roughly translated as "My country stands tall, I prefer it seated."

Naturally, some of the intelligentsia did express their indignation at the war, but throughout Europe they were never more than a tiny minority. Where were the Picassos painting their *Guernicas*, the intellectuals joining Bertrand Russell on his international tribunal, the petitioners rallying around a latter-day Sartre? The ambiguity of the case and the revulsion at Saddam Hussein's regime are not sufficient explanation, since people were not obliged to take sides in this conflict—there was no side worthy of support—but were simply asked to prevent and, if that was impossible, to condemn a cold-blooded massacre. In France in particular, with its tradition of protest, this relative silence says a great deal about the new, reduced role of dissenting intellectuals.

Daniel Singer is The Nation*'s Europe correspondent.*

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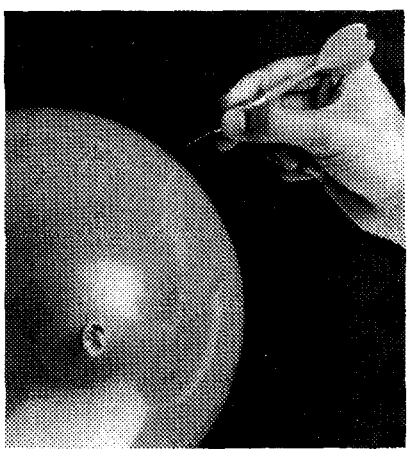

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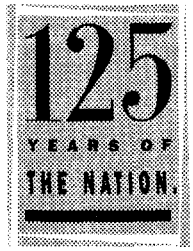

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Lilliputians on Sartre's Grave

Bernard-Henri Lévy, "BHL" to his fans, is one of those commercial travelers who, some fifteen years ago, peddled reactionary wares in pink wrappings and were known as *nouveaux philosophes*. In the context of an economic crisis that was generating mass unemployment, and with the memory of the 1968 revolt still fresh, their social function was to remind the younger generation—their own, that is—that while individual rebellion might be just, any attempt to bring about the radical transformation of society was suicidal. With the help of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* and an intense media campaign, they were quite successful.

Some of the intelligentsia did express their indignation at the war, but they were never more than a small minority.

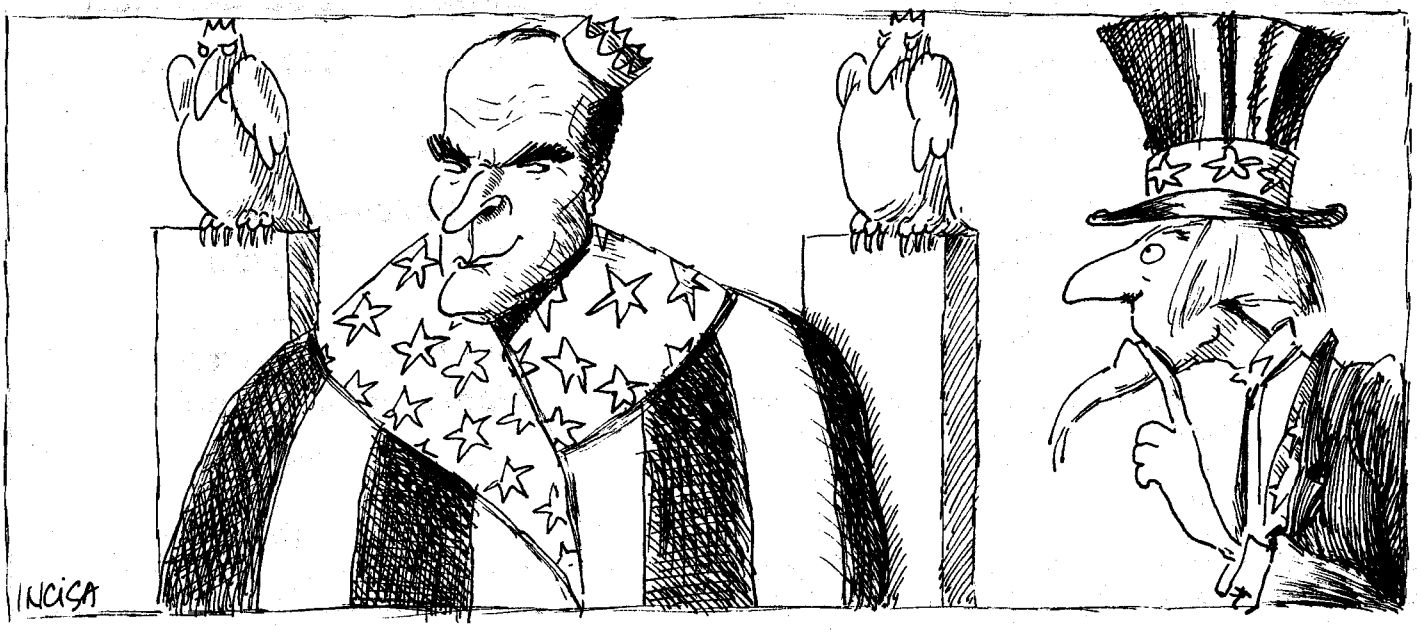
Once their duty was discharged, they were not dismissed, for it was understood they might still prove useful. BHL has an influential position in publishing. No longer quite as youthful but still handsome in his studiedly casual way, he is also a media personality (and better, incidentally, to look at than to listen to). He has recently been given the opportunity to present four one-hour programs on the larger of the two French public television channels. This series, along with a 500-page companion book, both modestly titled *The Adventures of Freedom*, gives his "subjective" history of French intellectuals from the Dreyfus case, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, to the present.

It is a very personal version. Leaving aside the Jewish question, to which he devotes considerable time, its main purpose is to show how French intellectuals succumbed to the two great diseases of Nazism and Communism—which Lévy consciously equates. The author performs this feat without once mentioning the Great Depression or mass unemployment. The repulsive side of capitalism is ignored; a dissident's rejection of French society is explained as the result of some guilty passion for purity or for youth. The dissidents are portrayed as strange plants growing, without any social soil, in midair. But then it was never the originality of their ideas that made the *nouveaux philosophes* relevant, since they had none. They were interesting as a fad, a symptom, as a conveyor belt for the ideas that the establishment needed to spread.

Today, the points they made matter more than the flimsy arguments used to back them. Lévy argues that André Malraux (especially after his return to the fold as Charles de Gaulle's Culture Minister), Albert Camus (particularly after his break with Sartre) and Raymond Aron, the academic editorialist, were right, while the Surrealists and the existentialist followers of Sartre and Frantz Fanon were wrong. This was not because they were stooges of Moscow; that charge, which might have been applied to C.P. members, just could not be made to stick in their case. They were guilty, in Lévy's view, because they did not share his pessimistic "philosophy"; because they assumed that history had meaning and that the world could be altered fundamentally. They were dangerous because their conception of commitment went beyond the defense of an undefined "liberal democracy" and because their idea of social justice went beyond the fashionable charity business. But thank God, says Lévy, that madness is behind us.

What the *nouveaux philosophes* achieved at the local level in the 1970s, BHL goes on, was expanded to a global scale by the upheaval in Eastern Europe ten years later. Even Solzhenitsyn is no longer needed. The collapse of "communism" spelled the end of all belief in radical change—though naturally we must remain vigilant: The spirit, not just the flesh, is always weak.

With his shrewd commercial sense of timing, BHL might have added a final chapter. The Persian Gulf war, however, came too late, and it is left to his fellow travelers to



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elaborate the point in current articles. The mission may have been accomplished internationally, they maintain, but in France it remains unfinished. To complete the normalization of his country Mitterrand must still drive the French, and above all French Socialists, to accept the United States as a model.

Un-American Activity?

The new philosophers did contribute to the ideological swing to the right in France, and historians may well see Sartre's funeral in 1980 as the symbolic end of the age of commitment among intellectuals. On the popular level, however, the transformation came later and required the bankruptcy of the left in office to be effective. Ten years ago France was still the odd country out in Europe; its people still vaguely believed that not only society but their own lives could be altered by radical political action. That is why the Western chanceries were so alarmed when Mitterrand was elected President in May 1981. But the left came and, instead of conquering, surrendered.

Mitterrand did not originally conceive of his role as the destroyer of dreams. He saw himself as a reformer somewhat to the left of Swedish social democracy. It was only two years later, finding himself in a cul-de-sac, that he discovered his new vocation as France's great "normalizer." He has since been hailed by his panegyrists as the man who fit France into the Western mold of consensus politics, proving that here, too, left and right could succeed each other in office.

There is an alternative interpretation of Mitterrand's performance. He has achieved his aim by wrecking popular belief in radical change, by proving to the establishment that the left in office presents no danger, that the Socialists are merely reformist managers of the capitalist system. He is now being urged to crown his achievement by persuading the French left to accept capitalism as the only world system and Washington as its headquarters. Those who oppose this hegemony of the United States, like Jean-Pierre Chevènement, who resigned as Defense Minister during the gulf crisis, are now branded in the highly consensual press as guilty of "crude anti-Americanism."

Such terms are meaningless until they are spelled out. A protester in Paris must state in the name of what he or she opposes the United States: the national heritage, a common European culture, a different social order? Back in the 1950s the gap between Europe and the United States seemed obvious, but the deep social transformation of Western Europe since then has narrowed the gap. A number of shifts, including the disappearance of the peasantry, the high degree of industrial and financial concentration, the strengthening of the private sector at the expense of the public sector, mean that whatever difference may remain, it is only quantitative and not qualitative. That is one reason European critics must now say not only why they oppose the "American way" but also what other road they are suggesting.

The second crucial change, naturally, is the collapse of the other bloc. When the Bolsheviks seized power it was not the United States they opposed but capitalism in general. By the

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end of World War II, Europe—and in a real sense the world—was split into two systems in conflict. For some years now, however, few people in the West, even among Communists, have really believed that the Soviet Union offered a socialist alternative. The Western left thus had to seek its own solutions, hostile both to neo-Stalinism and U.S. imperialism. Now it abruptly finds itself with only one opponent. In Warsaw, in Prague, even in Moscow if you listen carefully, it is the capitalist credo that is now being recited. For socialists in the West this has the benefit of spelling the end of guilt by association. But it also means that unless they wish to abdicate altogether, they cannot long delay the elaboration of their own proposals.

In facing Bush's new world order, purely nationalist opposition is no longer sufficient. When someone like Régis Debray—former companion of Che Guevara, former assistant to President Mitterrand, and now a convert to Gaullism—expresses his hostility to U.S. domination, one finds his attitude welcome but at the same time anachronistic, because it is not backed by a serious alternative. It is no longer possible to criticize, say, the form that mass culture takes in the United States, or the urban ghettos that are produced by social inequality, without specifying how we propose to deal with the problems, since they already exist in our own societies. And after what has happened in the East, it is unthinkable to propose abstract answers about collective ownership; instead, we must invent concrete forms of democracy at all levels that would insure that power flows from below and that the "associate producers" are really masters of their destiny in their workplaces and in society at large.

By definition, such a tremendous search stretches across frontiers, and the solution will not ultimately be found without the backing of the bulk of the American people. Hence, to describe such a quest as "anti-American" means identifying America with George Bush and assuming that the United States is doomed, by some curse, never to change its form of government or economic system. A bizarre fate for a country born out of revolution.

This is an old struggle, fought in a new context. How much this context has changed since Stalin's death was brought home recently here in Paris by the strange case of comrade Boudarel.

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Rewriting History

In 1950 Georges Boudarel was a 24-year-old philosophy teacher at the French *lycée* in Saigon. He was also a Communist Party member who went beyond the party line. Shocked by the oppression and cruelty of a colonial war, he decided to go over to the other side and join the Vietminh. As such, he soon found himself in the awkward position of being deputy head of a camp for French prisoners. This put him in charge of, among other things, the "re-education" of the camp's half-starved inmates (a point that worries some members of his defense committee, of which more in a moment). When the war was over, he lost many of his illusions and, after a stay in Prague, returned to France in 1967, once the government had granted a general amnesty for crimes connected with the war. No longer a communist—with either a small or a capital "c"—he made a successful academic career as an expert on Indochina and now teaches at the University of Paris. It was in this capacity that he attended a conference here in Paris in February, where he was identified by some former inmates of his camp. The discovery may not have been entirely accidental, given the campaign that was immediately unleashed.

In the French press, on radio and on TV, Boudarel is being presented as a traitor and torturer. Legally, he has nothing to fear. His university refuses to dismiss him. His actions in Vietnam are covered by the 1966 amnesty. And the right-wingers who threaten to sue him for "crimes against humanity"—which were excluded from the amnesty—have been warned by Boudarel's defense committee that they would do so at their peril. Documents recalling French torture and executions of Vietnamese prisoners are readily available, as are sordid stories about France's behavior in Algeria. Let the right open Pandora's box.

But the important issue is not the legal one. More important is what this episode is symptomatic of in political terms. The belated "discovery" that Russia was not a "workers' paradise" and the dramatic collapse of the Soviet bloc are being used to whitewash the colonial past, to describe torturers as patriots and those who dared to oppose their country's crimes as traitors—in short, to rewrite history.

I was reminded of this when we dined with friends the other night. My wife and I were the only people at the table never to have carried a Communist Party card (ex-C.P. members are still France's biggest party), and we were struck by how much our companions were on the defensive against this attack from the right. It was left to me, the eternal heretic, to tell these former believers that BHL was belittling their story, that it was part of the great tragedy of our century, a still-unfinished drama, whatever the fashionable scribblers may publish now.

How changeful is the spirit of the times! Once our dinner companions or their elders had been convinced that history was on Stalin's side. Today our propagandists proclaim with the same conviction that capitalism will reign from here to eternity. Intoxicated by its current success, they think they can foretell the future at a time when, as a wise Eastern European put it, "we do not yet know what our past is going to be." □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Daughters of the Revolution

GAYLE GREENE

EROTIC WARS: What Happened to the Sexual Revolution? *By Lillian Rubin. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 207 pp. $18.95.*

WOMEN TOGETHER, WOMEN ALONE: The Legacy of the Consciousness-Raising Movement. *By Anita Shreve. Fawcett. 275 pp. $8.95.*

ON HER OWN: Growing Up in the Shadow of the American Dream. *By Ruth Sidel. Viking. 276 pp. $18.95.*

After nearly thirty years of the women's movement, as we begin a new decade at the end of the century, there's a tendency to look back and to assess where we are and where we're going—a fairly widespread tendency, judging from the number of books currently doing this. Lillian Rubin's *Erotic Wars*, Anita Shreve's *Women Together, Women Alone* and Ruth Sidel's *On Her Own* are attempts to assess change. All agree that a revolution has taken place and that the texture of women's lives has been radically altered by the women's movement. Each focuses on a different aspect of this revolution—Rubin on the sexual revolution, Shreve on the legacy of consciousness raising, Sidel on young women's expectations. All use analyses of interviews, a form with which Betty Friedan has had spectacular success, in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), and a form which has obvious advantages as a means of taking the measure of a time—though it also has some disadvantages, being only as representative as the sampling of those interviewed.

Lillian Rubin argues that, contrary to the many magazine and television stories recently proclaiming the death of the sexual revolution and the return of sexual conservatism, "change of almost staggering proportions" has occurred "in relations between men and women." A "transformation in sexual norms . . . has been integrated into the culture, consolidated into sexual behavior and internalized by the majority of adults, as well as teenagers, in the country." Given that her sampling consists of 375 people who were interviewed and 600 who returned questionnaires—all urban, heterosexual and mostly white—such claims seem a bit global; but within this limitation, she demonstrates real, if uneven, change.

One of the things that emerges is that change occurs erratically. Young people are experimenting earlier and the sexual revolution has allowed girls more freedom of sexual expression than they've ever had, but the double standard persists in that girls are still more readily condemned for promiscuity than boys are. Besides, though young women are more sexually sophisticated, they are nevertheless—judging from the alarmingly high incidence of teenage pregnancy in this country—reluctant to use birth control. It's not that they don't know about birth control; it's more a matter of the persistence of a sexual conservatism that stigmatizes them for showing too much knowledge about sex.

Rubin announces her subject as a "story . . . of sex, gender and power and of how these have interacted with each other from the beginning of the sexual revolution until the present. . . . It is a tale of change . . . not just in response to the sexual revolution, but also to the gender revolution, which followed so closely on its heels." A book that really delivered on this would be valuable indeed, for the sexual revolution and gender revolution are deeply and complexly intertwined. However, Rubin does not get around to the gender revolution until midway through the book, too late for it to figure meaningfully in her discussion of the sexual revolution; when she does get to it, she never quite specifies what it is. By "gender revolution" she seems to mean the changes effected by the women's movement, but since these are by no means self-evident or agreed upon, they require more explanation. Rubin takes as a given what needs to be made a subject of inquiry. As a matter of fact, the causes of the sexual revolution are also somewhat unaccounted for. She offers bits and pieces of historical information—the entry of women into the work force, "escalating divorce rates," "the discontent so many women experienced with the confines of the 'feminine mystique' "—but again, this is late in the book, almost an afterthought. It comes too late to add to our understanding of the sexual revolution, where it came from, what happened in the 1960s to bring it on full force and how it interacted with feminism. The effect is to isolate the sexual revolution from the social and historical conditions that produced it.

Perhaps because the sexual revolution is insufficiently contextualized, the issue of power—announced by her title, *Erotic Wars*, and potentially one of the most fascinating aspects of her study—is insufficiently theorized. "The relationship between sex and power is a difficult one for most people to deal with directly," and "the bedroom is one of the primary places where men and women meet as intimate adversaries," Rubin rightly declares; but she herself does not deal convincingly with this relationship. I did find the voices convincing, angry testimonials to the power struggles between men and women: " 'When I come home from work . . . and the house looks like a disaster area, I could kill him, not screw him' "; " 'These guys are oh so liberated, but it's all words, nothing but words' "; " 'I hate to say it, but women's lib has really screwed things.' " But there's a temptation, in relying on interviews, to substitute anecdote for analysis, and Rubin leaves unexplored many questions raised by her material. Is the erotic inevitably linked to power in our culture? Are people's notions of the erotic changing as the balance of power shifts—assuming that the balance is indeed shifting? Does the persistence of traditional values and at-

IN ADDITION

Other recent books on the women's movement include Arlie Hochschild's *The Second Shift*; Wendy Kaminer's *A Fearful Freedom: Women's Flight from Equality*; Lyn Segal's *Is the Future Female?: Troubled Thoughts on Contemporary Feminism*; Michelene Wandor's interviews, *Once a Feminist: Stories of a Generation*; and Suzanne Gordon's *Prisoner of Men's Dreams: Striking Out for a New Feminine Future*. Also relevant are fictional retrospectives like Wendy Wasserstein's *The Heidi Chronicles*, Barbara Raskin's *Hot Flashes* and Anne Roiphe's *Lovingkindness*.

Gayle Greene is professor of English and women's studies at Scripps College. Her book, Changing the Story: Feminist Fiction and the Tradition, *will be published by Indiana University Press in the fall.*

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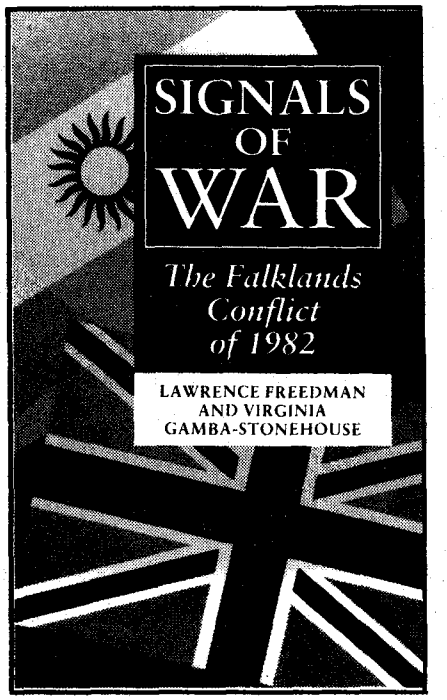
titudes beneath a rhetoric of change cast light on issues of power? Does the apparent increase in violence against women represent a response to shifting balances of power?

Rubin's study raises fascinating questions—about the relation of sex to power, the erratic movements of change, the discrepancies between real and rhetorical change– but they are questions requiring more care and subtlety than she brings to them. Despite her stated intentions, she does not relate the sexual revolution to the social revolution of the 1960s and 1970s or illuminate the relation of sex to power. Since she provides scant historical and theoretical scaffolding, what we get is a series of occasionally interesting insights with little sense of how they fit together. Rather than delving into the murkier aspects of the erotics of power, Rubin concludes her study with the comfortable assurance that the sexual revolution is in a mature stage of "consolidation," that we are taking "a thoughtful pause . . . to reorder our relationships . . . in ways that will bring more lasting satisfaction to us all"—a conclusion I found somewhat puzzling, in that it seems to take comfort from the sexual conservatism that she has challenged all along. It seems to follow more from the desire to wrap things up than from a reading of current events, such as the apparent increase in violence against women and the virulence of reaction against feminism.

Anita Shreve's book—based on interviews with sixty-five women who were active in consciousness-raising groups in the late 1960s and early 1970s—offers fascinating information about consciousness-raising groups: how they started, how they worked, how they changed women's lives. "In the early years of the 1970s . . . a phenomenon known as consciousness-raising swept the country" like a great "blaze." Shreve evokes that "moment of vision" "when a woman was . . . transformed . . . from apolitical to feminist," the "click" that initiated the heady process of making connections, the progress from isolation to commonality and confidence. "It was my rebirth as a human being," a "revolution in our lives"; "it changed my life." Shreve tends, however, to attribute a bit much to consciousness raising, describing it as though it had a life of its own rather than as one of several factors—the entry of vast numbers of women into the work force, the civil rights and antiwar movements, the sexual revolution, the



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spirit of dissent and revolt—that brought about change at the time.

"A decade and a half after the fact, women recall their time spent in consciousness-raising groups with a passion and nostalgia that is often surprising"; the voices in this book convey that passion and nostalgia. An almost elegiac quality comes through—the sense of loss of a vision, the betrayal of a promise, the pain and confusion of women wondering what went wrong. The "most significant and alarming" discovery is that "women are again isolated," ironically, Shreve suggests, "by many of the opportunities made possible by their participation in CR": " 'I don't exercise. I don't read books. I don't watch TV. . . . I don't see women friends. . . . I work and I'm a mother. That's it.' " " 'I don't have friends anymore. . . . I have no one really to talk to.' "

Women speak of consciousness raising as changing their lives, yet disassociate from feminism today.

These voices reveal that much has remained the same. Though women have more self-esteem and independence and awareness of women's issues and greater ease in talking about themselves, they are still dealing with the same old problems, and with some new, unforeseen ones, like inadequate child care and competition with other women. Many are struggling with unequal partnerships—and it is in relationships with men that they feel they've made the least progress: " 'Show me a marriage of truly equal partners . . . and I'm gonna go over and take a picture of it.' " Many feel exhausted from juggling work and family and from conforming to standards of appearance that remain as time-consuming, costly and constraining as styles in the 1950s. In their voices one hears the guilt and self-blame that practically come with the territory of being a woman today—" 'I'm always torn; I feel like I never give anyone or anything enough.' "

Notwithstanding these problems and the role the women's movement once played in their lives, most of the women interviewed no longer identify with feminism. In fact, many of their complaints implicitly target the women's movement. Some complain of becoming too much like men, of having to compete with men, of having to compete with other women; some wonder if areas of life pertaining to women—homemaking and motherhood—haven't been undervalued by the women's movement. But what I found doubly disturbing is that Shreve has the same tendency to blame feminism: Again and again her terms and formulations suggest that the problems of women are "the legacy of consciousness-raising." "One of the ironies of the Women's Movement," she says, "is that in preparing the ground for greater career opportunities for women, it sowed the seeds of its own demise. . . . Women who combine career and family life simply don't have any time left to devote to feminism or CR or activist issues." About child care, she says, "It's as if the Women's Movement had built a dazzlingly beautiful house and had forgotten to think about the foundation." But does she really want to name "career opportunities" as the problem, and not, rather, the reluctance of government and corporations to provide the supports that would enable women to take advantage of those opportunities? And is the women's movement really to blame for inadequate child care, when child care is a cause with which it has always been allied? Shreve describes women's exploitation of women as the most troubling legacy of the women's movement. " 'Supposedly liberated, progressive *feminist* women [exploit] other women,' " delegating their housework and child care to them. " 'It's a nasty kind of hypocrisy. . . . It's as though the fruits of liberation were only for a certain class of women.' " But are women and the women's movement really at fault for the devaluation of the caring professions generally—nurses, welfare and hospital workers, teachers—all of which have been fighting for their lives against government cutbacks in the last decade? Attributing too much power to consciousness raising, Shreve also attributes too much negative power to it and ends up blaming feminism for the faults of the system feminism is trying to change.

Shreve considers the paradox: Women speak of consciousness raising as changing their lives yet disassociate themselves from feminism today. She asks, How is it that consciousness raising can have meant so much to them then and so little to them now? Her answer, in part, is that, "during a decade in which radical rhetoric and social activism had been generally unwelcome and largely absent, women had been shaping and molding their own personalized visions of feminism to suit their private realities"—" 'We took what we learned and invested it in our personal lives' "—so that now even those who identify with feminism define it as "the very *personal* interaction each feminist woman has with her world." "Implied, but not always stated in their definitions, is a sense . . . of operating in a vacuum." Shreve says that "feminism today . . . is very much in the eye of the beholder." But I wonder, really, whether such "personalized" definitions are really about feminism.

The conclusion I'd draw is different from Shreve's, though it is implied by her material. It's the same lesson taught by earlier women's liberation movements—that personalized solutions that do not challenge the structures and institutions of society are ineffective; that as long as feminism is defined as individual self-improvement—"having it all"—a few women will be let in and bought off; that feminism is *not* in the eye of the beholder but rather in collective identification and effort, and it must be so if it is to have any force in society. Shreve's book traces career feminism to its inevitable dead end, and her plea for "a new, more empowered, collective response to the problems that confront women today" is appropriate, but there is a way in which she does not imagine what a "collective response" might be. Even in the "Suggested Topics for Consciousness-Raising" with which she concludes—and I like her suggestion that women come together in consciousness-raising groups again, though I don't hold the high hopes for it that she does—working for social change is mentioned as a kind of optional extra, when it's so obvious from her evidence that it was precisely the turning from "social activism" that left women high and dry. Shreve's analysis seems to be working in the vacuum she describes, and, ungrounded in a clearer sense of the social and historical processes of which consciousness raising is a part, it targets the wrong enemy and fails to insist on the meaning her material urges.

The question Ruth Sidel addresses is, How have young women been affected by a quarter-century of feminism, in terms of their expectations about work, relationships, their futures? What she discovered, through 125 interviews, was that though young women have got the

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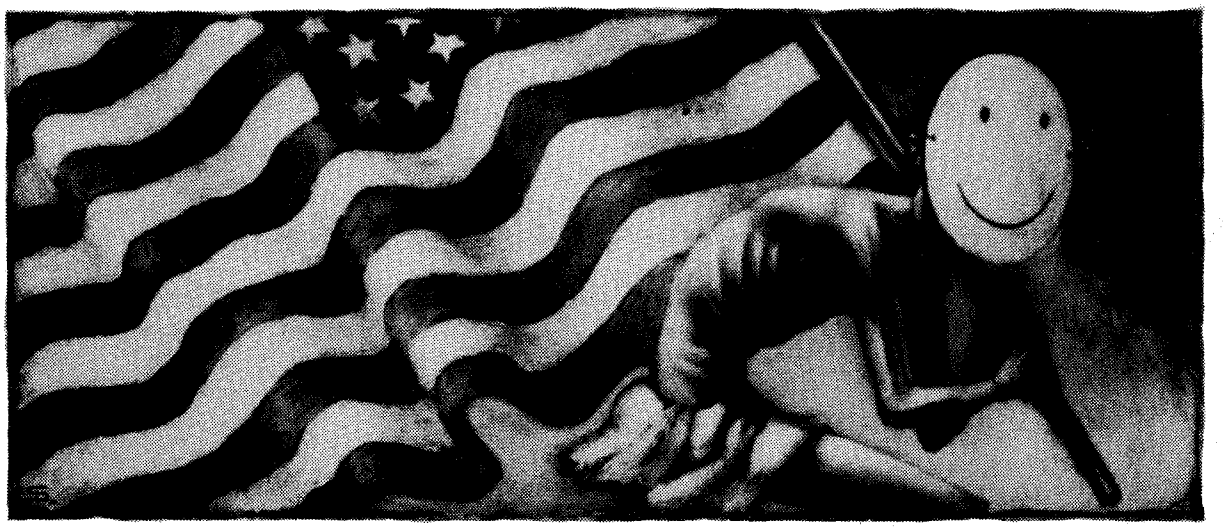

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message that they cannot depend on a man, they've bought into another kind of illusion, a kind of recycled American Dream—a dream of affluence and upward mobility imagined in terms "straight out of *Dallas*, *Dynasty*, or *L.A. Law*." In the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary—the increasing numbers of poor and homeless, particularly women and children, the need for two wage earners in the family, the decline of the middle class—young women believe in their power to make it on their own.

What is striking is "the narrowness of their image of success, the uniformity of their dreams. The affluent life as symbolized by the fancy car, the 'house on a hill,' the 'Bloomingdale's wardrobe,' . . . was described yearningly time and time again. As if programmed, the same words, the same dreams tumbled out of the mouths of young women from very different backgrounds and life experiences. Success was seen, overwhelmingly, in terms of what they would be able to purchase, what kind of 'life-style' they would have." Few spoke of being journalists, of teaching or caring for the sick or helping the poor or making a difference in the lives of others. Few spoke of issues such as day care, parental leave or the need to encourage society to provide supports for them and their children; they assumed that they as individuals would have sole responsibility and sufficient resources for those things.

If one combines their desire for affluence with their realization that they're going to have to provide for themselves, it becomes obvious that young women are going to have to have considerable earning power in order to achieve the life style of their dreams. But Sidel demonstrates that the work lives most women can expect bear little resemblance to their fantasies. In the past twenty years women have entered the work force and professions in astonishing numbers. The media present the image of women working in glamorous professions, but the reality is that most women work and will continue to work in low-status, low-income, dead-end jobs—in service, sales and clerical positions. Black and Latina women, crowded into a few sex-segregated occupations, work in the least desirable, lowest-paying jobs. Women are increasingly vulnerable to downward mobility, and minority women especially so. Even for those women who do make it into the professions, work life is likely to differ from that of men. In medicine, law, academia and business, women are not rising to the top. The workplace remains unyielding to their needs, and many are being forced to choose between a successful professional career and a personal life.

So where do young women get this dream of the good life? Its persistence is a lesson in the power of ideology—and Sidel's analysis of women's magazines and television shows how ideology is constructed and the purposes it serves. Women's magazines like *Seventeen*, *Mademoiselle*, *Glamour* and *Cosmopolitan* promulgate the message that "changing our lives is fundamentally within our control," that women can, "if they work hard enough, exercise long enough, eat correctly, and dress fashionably, achieve their dreams." Television reinforces a belief in individualism by the very form of the weekly program: The need for a wrap-up imposes "simplistic solutions that are . . . within the control of the individual. Seldom are problems depicted as larger than the individual's or the family unit's capacity for coping; rarely are problems depicted as systemic, originating in the very structure of society." Television programs also create the impression that looks count more than brains and that one can magically jump from dating and shopping to a well-paid professional career, with no academic interests or vocational skills. Magazines and television promote a fantasy of a white, upper-middle-class good life that has little relevance to most women, because upscale sells. It sells products, but it also sells faith in the American way of life, with disastrous consequences—for if the system is functioning as advertised, we have only ourselves to blame for our failures.

Sidel analyzes the renewed belief that success is there for the taking as resulting from a convergence of several strands of American thought: the American Dream with its promise of upward mobility; the ideology of the Reagan years, which stressed individualism and undermined belief in communitarian ideals or efforts; and the women's movement, with its promise of entitlement. She notes the sad irony of feminism's part in this, for it certainly did not set out to bolster the ideology of individualism and the American Dream but rather encouraged women to see themselves as participating in a collective struggle for equality. However, Sidel's analysis is different from Shreve's faulting of feminism for the failures of the system it sought to change. Sidel acknowledges that "movements do not exist in a vacuum," that the women's movement has existed "within an individual-

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istic, hierarchical system committed for the most part to private enterprise and profit making"—a system that has powerful tendencies to reduce feminism to individual success (as is abundantly clear from Shreve's interviews). What I admire about Sidel's book is this sort of contextualization. Her comprehensiveness is borne out by her method, which brings to bear a variety of factors, not only television and women's magazines but fiction and film. Rather than isolating the phenomena she describes and assigning excessive praise or blame to any single cause, her analysis takes into account the complex of forces that create culture. Not coincidentally, the sampling of women interviewed in this study is more diverse in terms of class, race, ethnic background and geography than Rubin's or Shreve's.

Sidel considers the irony that young women, a group outside the cultural mainstream in age and gender, have internalized that most mainstream of ideologies, the American Dream, with its belief in the power of the individual to shape her own destiny. Even for most men, the American Dream was a myth. Men did not make it alone—they had women. "They *still* don't do it alone. How can women do it alone . . . when they earn 65 percent of what men earn, when housing is virtually unaffordable for millions of families, when child care is scarce and all too often second-rate or worse? And where did they get the notion that they *should* be able to make it alone?" It is a false and pernicious dream that has deluded women into believing that "having it all" is within their reach if they grasp hard enough—a dream which, offering the illusion of choice, prevents real choice by impeding the sort of analysis that might lead to action.

In her last chapter, "Toward a More Caring Society," Sidel offers suggestions for reorganizing society so that men and women can play an equal part in the public sphere and children will have the care they need—suggestions that amount to a reordering of our priorities and a reallocation of resources. The workplace must be reorganized to meet the needs of employees, not just the profits of employers; the professions cannot continue to function "as if there were a full-time wife and mother at home. . . . Alternative paths to partnerships, professorships, and promotion must be developed" that will neither leave women at the bottom of the career ladder nor force them to choose between personal and professional lives. Market forces cannot be permitted free rein—the education of the young, health care, child care, community life "are more important than profit," and the caring professions must be valued and rewarded. Sidel ends with an impassioned plea for a new American Dream, for a collective, humanitarian effort that will include the many who are currently excluded from the system.

Altogether, these books do not paint a particularly cheerful picture. As disturbing as the inequities they attest to is the evidence that the older generation has forgotten what it once knew about collective thinking and that the younger generation has bought into the ideology of individualism and materialism in a society hostile to its real interests. Rubin and Shreve demonstrate the difficulty of imagining a way out—the difficulty of seeing things whole, the tendency to privatize and fall back on conventional formulations. Sidel does imagine collectively, and her book offers a moving, persuasive plea for an alternative vision and effort. □

The Stuff of Real Life

LEWIS COLE

Four years ago baby boomers entered prime time. Ten o'clock Tuesday offered the inner world. *Thirtysomething* doubled the half-hour sitcom, expanded the usual nuclear family into a community of hip friends and broadened the predictable domestic dramas to include dream sequences and toilet training. Thursdays, same time slot, came the outer world. Mixing *Dallas*-like trashiness with the social conscience of *The Defenders*, *L.A. Law* used the love lives of senior partners in a snazzy, downtown L.A. boutique law firm to spice a weekly, serious subject—assisted deaths, abortions, white hate groups.

The shows were opposites in concept and execution: the realism of Philadelphia versus the romance of L.A., 1960s-sounding, solo-guitar soundtrack versus percussive beat, veterans of the counterculture versus fast-track children of the Reaganite 1980s.

Thirtysomething was intended to show "life on earth as we know it," write the show's novice producers in *thirtysomething stories*, a recently published paperback of nine scripts (Pocket Books, $10.95). "We're interested in the stuff of real life. Small moments examined closely, showing the way people really talk, and dream, and even fantasize. . . . The kind of show that people might look at and say, 'That's my life, I said that last night.' "

In contrast, no one I've ever known—with the possible exception of a tennis bum who earned a small fortune as the personal manager of several Hollywood starlets—would be caught dead claiming to utter a line from *L.A. Law*. Created by the trend-setting (*Hill Street Blues*) Steven Bochco, with Terry Louise Fisher, the show was aggressively *outré*, featuring at least one Standards and Practices taboo-breaking scene a month: a lawyer committing suicide as his closing statement, coolly passionate Susan Dey using the word "tits" in court, nerdy Douglas Brackman screwing his dead father's mistress, perennially abused Abby flirting with a possible lesbian lover. Unlike ABC's Volvo-driving, penny-watching, moralizing families, NBC's lawyers tooled around in sports cars, didn't buy a pair of socks for less than $25 and aired moral scruples only to be mercilessly shot down as fuzzy-minded hypocrites by their colleagues. As for family, they were isolates—parents only appeared in this show to be denounced or declared dead. Orphans of principle, the denizens of the McKenzie, Brackman law firm were devoted solely to booking hours, winning clients and outwitting their adversaries.

Yet since their premieres the shows have turned into their opposites. The formulaic serial has become a treasure-trove of social observation; its delight in yuppie culture has soured to contempt and rejection. Meanwhile, the innovative *thirtysomething* has shrunk into a predictable sitcom, *Father Knows Best* for the 1990s.

Thirtysomething started on an original note. It was fun to see normal sitcom subjects—hiring a baby sitter, holding a party for the boss, fighting with a friend—accessorized with Pottery Barn furniture and J. Crew clothes and talked about in the familiar, hip language of post-1960s culture. Certain story lines—the death of Michael's father, Elliot and Nancy's separation, the dissolution of Michael and Elliot's small firm and its

Lewis Cole is fortysomething and not a lawyer.

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aftermath—generated morally complex, emotionally powerful episodes. Yes, some of the principals passed off mannerisms—Ken Olin's mumbling, Peter Horton's smirk, Mel Harris's worried stoicism, Patricia Wettig's preening confusion—as performances. But other appearances captured a pathos rare for serial television: Danton Stone portrayed Michael's younger, incompetent brother with a thrashing, useless fury, and you could always count on Timothy Busfield and Melanie Mayron for honest, offbeat moments. (Busfield's perfectly depicted self-inflicted humiliations while looking for a job were painful to watch.) Yes, the cast demonstrated an appalling smugness at times; but this self-satisfaction reflected a truth about the 1960s generation in the same way, say, that the optimism of the Kramdens in *The Honeymooners* or Desi and Lucy in *I Love Lucy* was appropriate for the 1950s. Besides, the creators cleverly introduced the icily attractive Miles Drentell—played with a delicate, ironic reserve by David Clennon—as the head of the high-tech, New Age ad firm Michael and Elliot work for. Studiedly enigmatic, a jaundiced manipulator (the character is reportedly based on superagent Mike Ovitz), Drentell helps clear the often sanctimonious air that pervades the show.

But even at the start drawbacks accompanied these virtues. The self-consciously clever dialogue—"You were so dark and moody you didn't even reflect light"—made everyone sound like bit characters from a Woody Allen film. The smooth, timeless social ambience—without Reagan, the homeless, blacks or Latinos (in predominantly Third World Philadelphia), or even people *with* trust funds—produced a *Leave It to Beaver* world. The relationship between the two main couples repeated the Hollywood cliché: The off-lead Westons suffered for the sins of the leading Steadmans. While Elliot and Nancy endured separation, affairs, family therapy and cancer, Michael and Hope enjoyed a new child, a substantial raise and several relationship-strengthening bouts with contemplations of infidelity. Little details were annoyingly off. "Feels strange to be in a park without tear gas," says Ellyn, Hope's oldest friend. In 1986? Where has she been the last fifteen years? Tompkins Square?

At first this tension added to the show's fun. You recognized the problem that began each show—Ethan's fear and anger at his parents' separation, Hope's dithering about a job, Ellyn's pursuit of a new boyfriend—and moaned and guffawed at the bumbling attempts of these best and brightest to resolve the conflict. The show fulfilled one of TV's important community functions: The Steadman crew served as a source of gossip; in discussing their problems you found out what you and your friends thought about things.

But in time the tension disappeared. For whatever reason—long-term planning? a sudden change in production staff?—the show's self-satisfaction has become its main quality. *Thirtysomething* has turned into a cheery, Ben Wattenberg tour of the glories of Reaganite America. Worse, the show has also begun to be guilty of TV's one unpardonable sin—it's boring.

To begin with, the show has lost even its slender grasp of reality. "Happy endings, nice and tidy/It's a rule I learned in school/Get your money every Friday/Happy endings are the rule," sings the narrator of *The Threepenny Opera*. The writers of *thirtysomething* have taken him to heart. In their world, everything—work, children, spouse—yields satisfaction. Betraying his boss, Michael wins Drentell's confidence and respect; arriving disastrously late, Melissa wows the (who else?) *Vanity Fair* editor with her work. Even death has no dominion: Nancy is cured.

The weight of this Panglossian insistence warps the characters. Taking himself and his work much too seriously—he should sneak a look at Shaw's jaunty prefaces—Richard Kramer, a producer of the series, comments in *thirtysomething stories* that one rule of the show has been never to do episodes on "Subjects." (Writing from character rather than plot or subject is a Hollywood piety, and presumably denotes the difference between artistic and commercial work—a judgment that consigns most of Euripides and all of Shakespeare's historical dramas to secondary status.) "Subject comes from character, and only from character; that was our group mantra," writes Kramer. This noble-sounding chant is specious in both theory and practice. A *thirtysomething* episode in which Ellyn's father has an affair is no less about subjects—male menopause, sexism, etc.—than an *L.A. Law* in which Sifuentes sues a hospital for malpractice. Besides, the resolutions of *thirtysomething* episodes constantly confound the characters of the show's principal players.

Take Michael—Steadman, as he's called by Drentell. Looked at objectively, Steadman is a recognizable type. He

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is emotionally remote (Ken Olin's nasal Hi-honey-I'm-home greetings make one long for Robert Young's hearty kisses); a coward (he emulates a boss he despises and excels at a job he believes unworthy of his artistic talents) and a dud around the house (his relationship with Janey, his—still—characterless 4-year-old daughter, is nonexistent, and I can't remember a scene in which he performs a domestic chore other than washing the dishes). His main gifts are loyalty (partly a consequence of his prudence); an unerring sense of corporate reality (when their firm collapsed, Elliot dreamed and whimpered while Michael unflinchingly accepted their failure) and the good sense to surround himself with friends more interesting than himself, though as a snob he understands others' quirks of character—Gary's irresponsibility, Melissa's neuroticism, Elliot's childishness—only to feel superior to them. In short, he's Dick Van Dyke in Paul Stuart suspenders, our generation's version of *l'homme moyen sensuel*, competitive, competent, cautious, a businessman whose thwarted artistic and social ambitions have fueled his corporate ascent, the junior officer of bourgeois society who—in the hands of a genius of realism—ends up as Charles Bovary or Karenin.

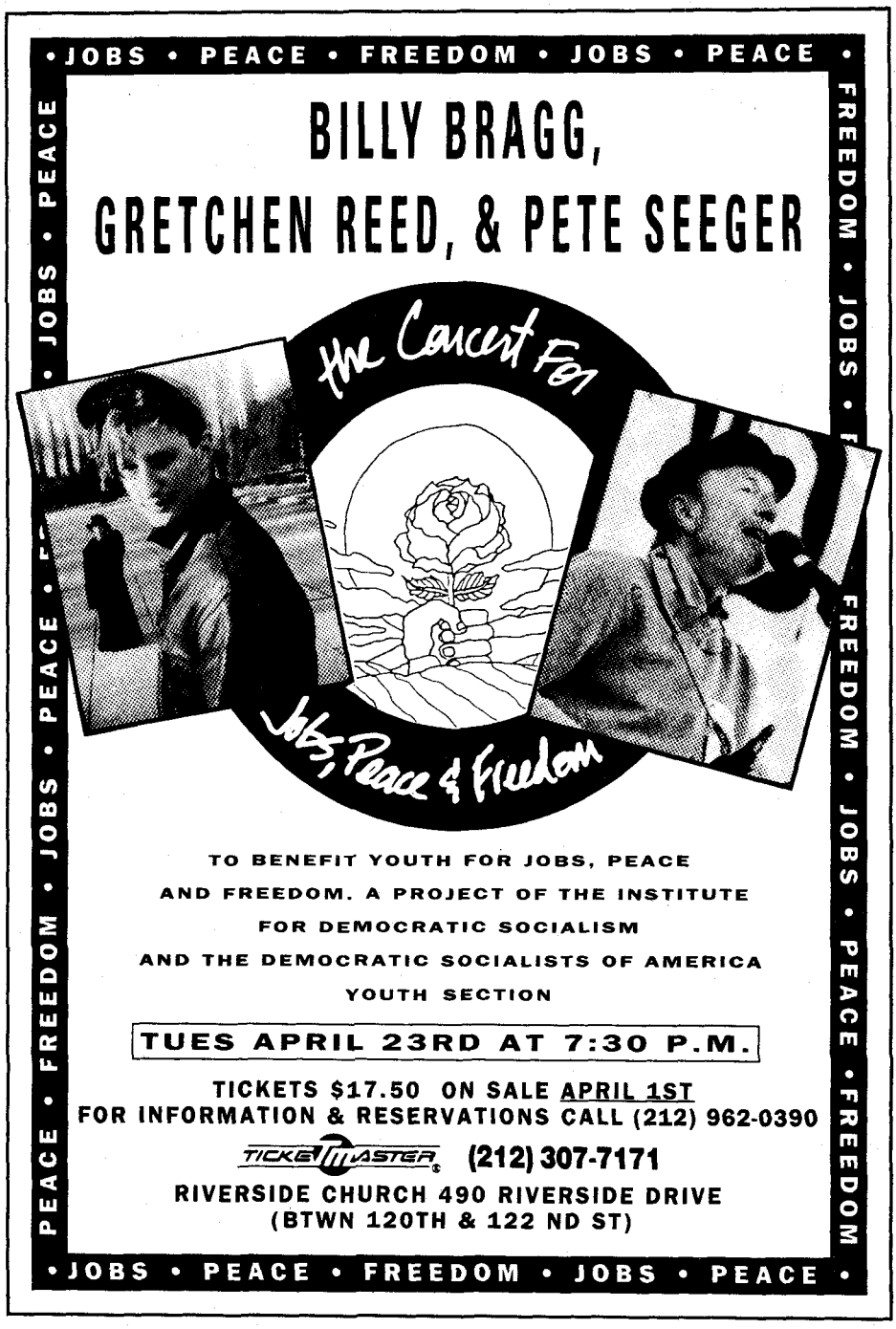
But how is Steadman presented to us by his creators? As an exemplar, the moral center of the show, the only member of his tribe who speaks both the practical language of the real world and the philosophical tongue of the inner world of emotion and morality. His accommodations with society are heralded as heroisms of everyday life; all his shortcomings are portrayed as ennobling attributes.

The effect produced by this idealization is bizarre. Instead of Steadman's problems showing his limitations and making us like and sympathize with him, they demonstrate his superiority—a false note that makes us cringe. His desire for other women proves his fidelity to Hope—not his simple fear of having an affair; his contempt for his younger brother demonstrates his peerless grasp of reality—not his childish wish to beat his sibling.

And what is true for Michael goes for the show's other "good" characters (irresponsible characters, such as Elliot, don't bear this cross). Looked at objectively, Hope is a dilettante (she even dabbles in love affairs), but she is offered to us as a loving, independent, courageous, perfect wife, mother and woman. Similarly, Nancy is an emotional liar; her confusion is a ploy; she's simply too frightened to admit any feelings other than pleasant ones. But she is portrayed as a saint, complete with radiant smile.

The producers' refusal to accept the foibles of their own characters leads to a lack of dramatic tension and action. *Thirtysomething* is the first television hit since *Dragnet* to substitute reticence for conflict. For a group of good friends, these people make the Puritans seem like chatterboxes. They always wait until after the penultimate commercial break to tell one another what's on their minds. They have no choice. Confronting the real and difficult problems they face would throw them back on the limits of their circumstances and temperaments.

Thus, while still unemployed and being wooed by Drentell, Michael takes a writing class. He's not very good at it—Michael's too self-protective to be a writer. But the show waits until the last moment for this revelation and converts his failure into success. "I could wear down enough pencils to make a forest," he tells Hope in a note of cloying sentimentality at episode's end, "but I could never come up with a sentence that'd be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worth as much to me as you are." In the same way, Hope and her old friend Ellyn find themselves estranged after Hope gives birth. The real conflicts of personality, choice and circumstance that make up their differences could easily prove fatal to the friendship, especially given *thirtysomething*'s division of its female characters into classic Hollywood types of single, neurotic career women (Melissa and Ellyn) and Berenstain Bear–like moms (Nancy and Hope). But if Ellyn and Hope faced their differences at the start, the rest of the hour would have to follow them as they solved their problems, unhappily or not. Instead they spend forty minutes realizing they are angry and the last five minutes making up. "Can't we go separate ways and still be friends?" Ellyn asks. No. You probably can't.

It's naïve to look for realism in sitcoms; no one expects the producers of *thirtysomething* to live up to their word. But there's fake and fake. A world of difference exists between a character such as Jackie Gleason's Ralph Kramden and *thirtysomething*'s dishonest romanticizations. Kramden is a cartoon character—oversized, stubborn, impetuous, a loser whose tough life and big ego have turned him into a constant dreamer. But he remains true to himself. Every show teaches the same lesson—Ralph, you're a big jerk and boy are you lucky to have Alice. Similarly, Lucy is scatterbrained and well-meaning; Mary Tyler Moore, independent; Archie Bunker, narrow-minded; even the dads of the 1950s were domestic dunderheads. The world—the situations in which these weekly visitors find themselves—is constantly showing them their limits, the failures that make them likable and human. *Thirtysomething* is the first show in which perfection is portrayed as a human quality. (And woe to anyone who thinks otherwise. This show hates political activists. The commitment of Susannah—Gary's wife—to public service betrays her incapacity to love. The bearded environmentalist whom Hope falls for is a homewrecker.)

The most extreme instance of this myopia was Nancy's triumph against cancer. Never mind that the rates of survival are increasing. Death—the ultimate rebuff to the narcissistic attempt to control experience—remains the stark human truth of the disease. The collision of these characters with this incontrovertible reality was startling. And the audience responded maturely to the challenge: Everyone *expected* Nancy to die, everyone *wanted* Nancy to die. Let me put the case as strongly as possible: Even Anna Quindlen wanted Nancy to die. Instead, what did the creators do? Smash poor unfortunate Gary—the one remaining faint voice of dissent in this happy community—to smithereens.

In this world no experience or emotion—not even at the firm itself—is so sanctified that it can't be turned into a commodity.

Meanwhile, back on the Coast, the lawyers who work for McKenzie, Brackman are constantly discovering the limits of the world. No mending and proving for these up-and-comers; the rigors of corporate survival have taught them to thrive on confrontation. Their ten-minute staff meetings provide more humiliation and revelation than a marathon group-therapy session. Flatulence, vanity, dullness—you name the fault, they spell it out. The life of the open book, my stepfather, José Yglesias, called the communal existence of revolutionary Cuba in 1967; it lives again in McKenzie, Brackman's boardroom.

Of course, McKenzie, Brackman bears as much resemblance to a real law firm as, say, *Bonanza* did to a working cattle ranch; and the show's courtroom scenes don't begin to suggest the grim truth of judicial process in our society. Yet this fairy tale of sex and social issues summons up a truer, much less idealized version of contemporary American society than its ABC counterpart.

To begin with, the show's improbable situations aren't all that unreal. *L.A. Law* skirts the line between the absurd farce of *Night Court* and the soap opera of *Dallas*. The more ridiculous trials—the oversized African entry in the annual frog-jumping contest, the dwarfs used as human bowling balls—are of course taken from actual cases. But even sillier plot twists—Arnie Becker becoming an overnight celebrity with a do-it-yourself divorce video, Douglas Brackman dating Vanna White—depict a society in which the most private human interaction can be converted into a spectacle and the blessed curse of celebrity strikes without warning.

Moreover, these improbable situations are always resolved by creditable solutions. The courtroom scenes of course defy happy endings: Killers run free while children are buried. The show exploits these crises as emotional climaxes. In a recent episode parents sued to return to the care of the state their disturbed adopted child; the obligatory separation scene—pleading 9-year-old clinging to desperate mother—was appropriately heart-wrenching. But by and large these moments are like A.T.&T. commercials, flashcards to trigger your feelings. Like similar scenes on *thirtysomething*, they leave you crying and unconcerned, and demonstrate a manipulation at which television excels (and which represents a kind of emotional fascism).

But our lawyers suffer out of court as well. *Law*'s equivalent of Steadman—the character who embodies the show's point of view toward experience—is Arnie Becker, a divorce lawyer. Becker is a peculiarly Hollywood type: a driven, sharp-as-a-tack intelligence devoted wholly and unapologetically to a completely second-rate subject. He is Michael's mirror image: approximately the same age, equally gifted, equally self-deceiving. But his characterization is infinitely more rounded, many-sided, realer. Unlike Steadman, Becker is unmediated. Arnie starts to slug the taunting, opposing attorney who says there's a "fat boy" inside Becker wanting to come out. He wears his insecurity on his sleeve—or fly: Sexually compulsive, he is disloyal, manipulative, selfish, ruthless. "Is something the matter with Arnie?" his wife asks Roxanne, Arnie's long-suffering secretary. "He's become so considerate lately" (no *thirtysomething* frills in the best *L.A. Law* dialogue, just dead-on observation). While the writers don't coddle him—Arnie literally wrecks homes for a living—they also don't demonize him as a convenient villain. Turning 40, convinced he wants a family but scared or unwilling to take the smallest step toward maintaining one, he is a character who has lost any moral rudder and victimizes himself along with everyone else.

Arnie's desperation is also evident in the other characters. None of them have found happiness. At the same time, they don't cry in their champagne. In a recent episode, Rosalind Shays—a closing-in-

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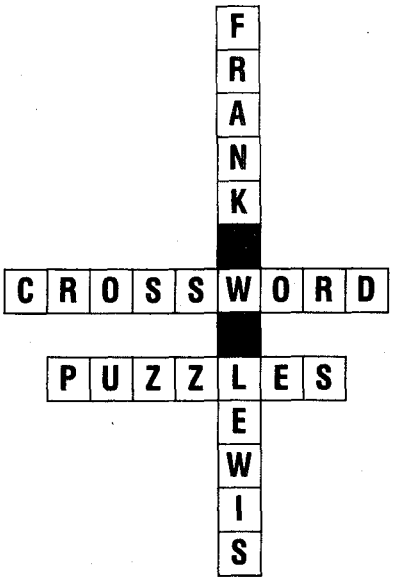
on-60 powerhouse attorney who has tried to take over the firm—asks to marry Leland, the avuncular head of McKenzie, Brackman, whom she tried to depose before taking to bed. Leland likes, but doesn't love, Rosalind; the soul of propriety, he refuses. For a moment, Shays is tempted to play the schoolgirl and cut off the relationship. Then she relents. Dinner that night? she asks, accepting the unalterable reality of her situation. "Something simple," she adds, and touchingly suggests Hollywood's symbol for self-fortification. "Maybe pasta. I feel like pasta." (The following week she stepped unwittingly into an empty elevator well; in short, she got the shaft.)

On *L.A. Law*, hopes exist only to be destroyed. Abby won't get the nod for partnership; golden-boy Kuzak wins his biggest case only to discover his client is guilty and has played him for a sucker; Stuart will never win a case he litigates; Anne will never be the mother she wishes she could become.

These limits aren't simply matters of temperament. Offering a wealth of detailed social observation—clothes, language, attitude—the show provides endless variations on the power of money, class and status to determine people's lives. When Stuart and Anne decided to have a baby, the show explored the labyrinthian, class-structured world of adoption, and the appearance and manner of the people who live off the trade—as well as the personal and professional costs that children exact from middle-class parents.

In this world no experience or emotion—not even at the firm itself—is so sanctified that it can't be turned into a commodity. Originally the members of McKenzie, Brackman talked about themselves as a community, a quiet eddy of principles and partnership in the turbulent stream of commercial practice. But the need for profit and prestige has frayed the bonds of comradeship that once held the firm together. "Do we have to always fight, for God's sake?" Leland McKenzie asked in a staff meeting recently, shortly before saying he wanted to "pummel" the three partners who had left to start their own firm. In this war for survival, the once high-minded law office has been diluted to include crude types without which the place won't survive, and the partners have been forced to take morally ambiguous cases. Jonathan Rollins, *Law*'s matinee-idol buppie, defended a white cop in a police-brutality case spear-



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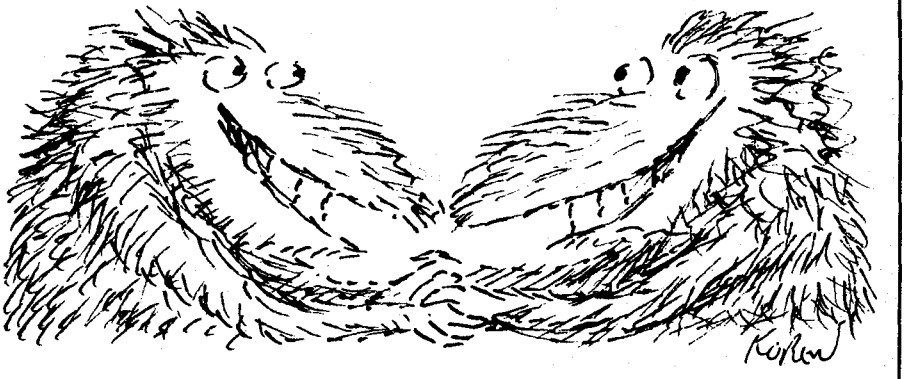

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headed by a morally ambiguous black community leader (Al Sharpton has become television's favorite caricature). Rollins won the case only to be arrested several weeks later by two white cops who suspected him of being a rapist when they saw him jogging in a white neighborhood. When he resisted, they beat him up. The episode predated the recent police scandal by a month—the stuff of real life, as *thirtysomething*'s producers would say.

Having said all this, one thing must be added: *thirtysomething* stays with you; *L.A. Law* vanishes the next day. Why does the show get under your skin?

First, the attempt to portray real life has its rewards. The problems on *thirtysomething* are recognizable, not ridiculous. No one watching *Law* knows or cares how these people live in real life. On the other hand, a lot of us viewing *thirtysomething* have had a first child; we identify with Hope and Michael when they decide to take a weekend away from Janey, then react with disbelief when they agree to spend the precious forty-eight hours on a camping trip with their friends. (A hotel with twenty-four-hour room service, yes; a camping trip? Never.)

But the show is also seductive. In "real life," families like the Steadmans and Westons are caught in a grind of work and bills unknown to their parents. To maintain their middle-class lives they must spend unthinkably large sums of money and sacrifice many personal, social and political standards. But who wants to hear that? Much better to make one's days a fairy tale, convert nasty compromises into heroic gestures. In one of the many self-inebriated passages that woozily wander through the pages of *thirtysomething stories*, Joe Dougherty writes that the scripts "were passionate, complex, and touched with a radical message: life is messy, full of terror and loss, but we're alive and capable of great love, so let's get on with it." Sorry—*Bambi* and *Dumbo* already taught us that. The show appeals to the spoiled brat in all of us. Its false consciousness is a self-indulgence of which even Ralph Kramden himself—that big baby—would be ashamed. □

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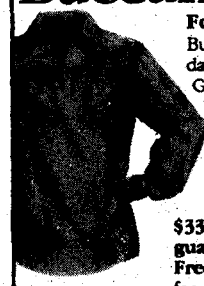

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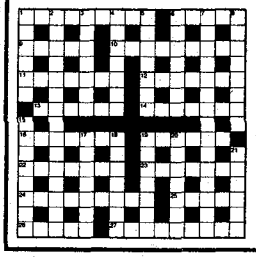

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U	■	T	■	T	■	A	■	T	■	T	■	E	■	E
L	A	U	G	H	I	N	G	H	Y	E	N	A	S	■
A	■	R	■	E	■	S	■	Y	■	R	■	S	■	A
T	H	E	O	R	I	E	S	■	I	N	C	H	E	D
O	■	■	■	B	■	■	■	■	I	■	■	■	■	O
R	A	C	K	E	T	■	F	A	S	T	B	A	L	L
Y	■	H	■	D	■	M	■	B	■	Y	■	L	■	E
■	H	A	R	D	H	E	A	D	E	D	N	E	S	S
D	■	M	■	I	■	A	■	U	■	R	■	W	■	C
R	I	B	A	N	D	S	■	C	H	E	M	I	S	E
A	■	E	■	G	■	L	■	T	■	S	■	F	■	N
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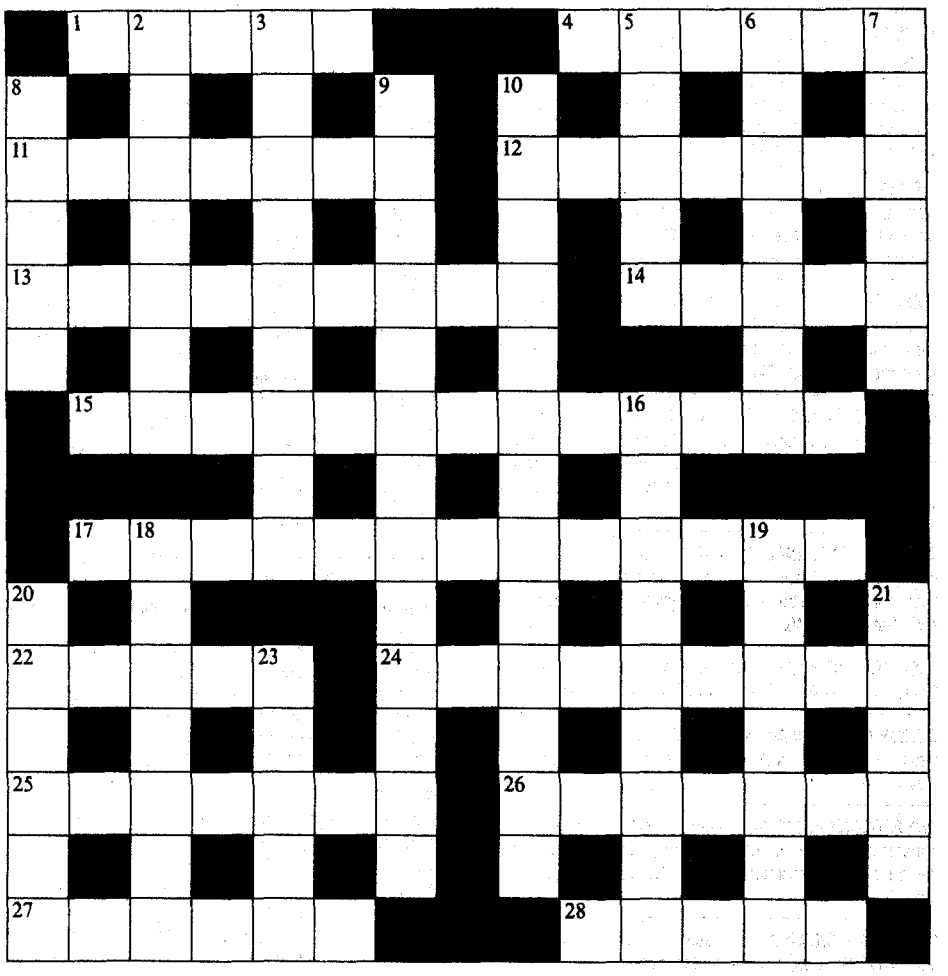

ACROSS

1 and 4 Not the one where the Light Brigade charged, being much closer. (5,6)
11 Sort of eyeing the capital of Hibernia might be a personal matter. (7)
12 How sone people cut salami bothers others greatly, perhaps. (7)
13 The people in Greece, or perhaps Ohio, taking one Gallup event to heart. (3,6)
14 Turner, possibly loyal at heart makes an appearance here (7)
15 Dumbfounded, makes the sounds of the storm with a work vehicle. (13)
17 A deadly holding for a famous gunfighter—you can bet on it! (4,3,6)
22 A sort being minced meat, perhaps. (5)
24 Slangy followers of certain Philippine people around the north? (9)
25 How to take a moving picture with great pain, and a certain flamboyance. (7)
26 The file marking the end of the tale-bearer? (3-4)
27 and 28 As you might, meeting what you do before picking up the pizza? (4,2,5)

DOWN

2 and 18 French sleeve so-called though you might not hear TV French when listening to one. (7,7)
3 Made by the watchman or the British sandwich maker. (3,6)
5 Pretty bad, in fact it sounds like something you might throw away! (5)
6 Is one reputedly moonstruck? (7)
7 Very agreeable fellows, though the enemy's responsible for them. (3-3)
8 Palindrome typified by older Iranian heads? (5)
9 An incredulous rejoinder, unless made by the child at storytime. (4,2,7)
10 Is the show of coming-up falsehoods, to be concluded with a different Miss Garson? (6,7)
16 One that keeps things running correctly, to place it almost at the bottom in usual fashion. (9)
18 See 2
19 No agent possibly, for what you might measure shipping in. (7)
20 Cancer, typically? (6)
21 Some sing this of a tree around the South. (5)
23 Does this sign sometimes mean "no playing here?" (5)

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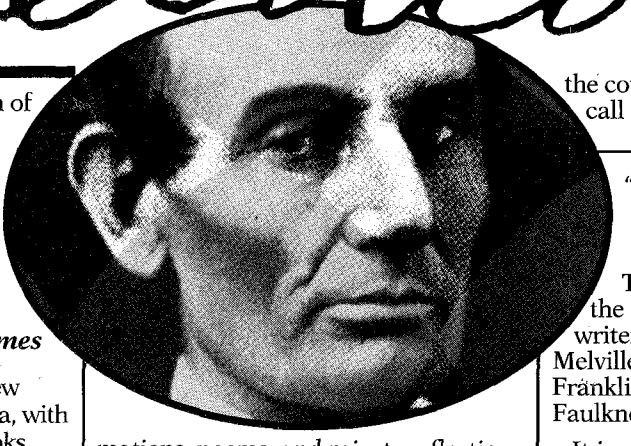

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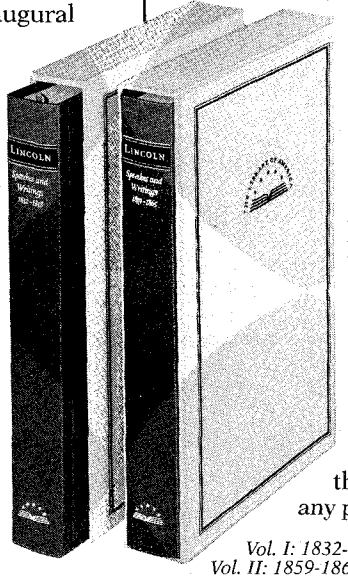

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